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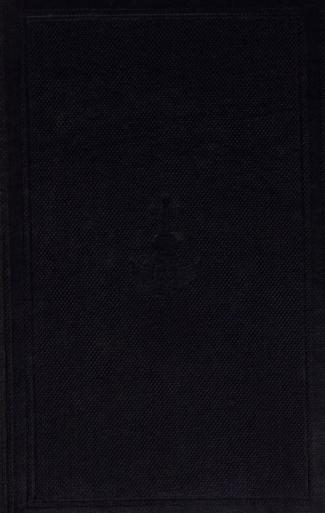
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VOICE OF GOD

TO THE

HEART OF HIS SERVANTS

WHO

ASPIRE TO PERFECTION

BY THE REV. J. PERRY.

"Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."-1 Kings iii. 10.

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APPROBATION

OF THE

RIGHT REV. DR. WAREING.

"Having read the Work entitled, 'THE VOICE OF GOD TO THE HEART OF HIS SERVANTS WHO ASPIRE TO PERFECTION,' by the Rev. J. PERRY, we highly approve of the same, and commend it to the Use of the Faithful of the Eastern District, as a help to Piety, and a means of Sanctification.

" + WILLIAM, BISHOP OF ARIOPOLIS,

Vicar Apostolic of the Eastern District.

"Given at Northampton,
November 9, 1846."

PREFACE.

The following Meditations and Considerations, which are in part taken from a small Latin Work of R. P. Daniel Pawlowski, O. S. J., are arranged according to the plan of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola: although not expressly divided into weeks and days, like his Spiritual Exercises; because the chief intention of the Writer is, to present a book for daily meditation, one subject to be taken for each successive day, until all of them have been meditated. The subjects are, however, so chosen and arranged, that they may be used for a Spiritual Retreat, by making the first Meditation, and reading the first Consideration, on the Eve of the Retreat; and then three Meditations, with the following Consideration, on each of the succeeding days.

The Ejaculation, placed at the head of each subject, is intended to be occasionally repeated, from the time when you prepare for that meditation to which it is prefixed, until you prepare for the next.

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Those persons who wish to learn how to meditate, would do well to read a small work on the subject, published by Richardson and Son, Derby, price one penny, entitled, "A Method of Meditation intended for the Purification of the Soul."

Every Meditation should be commenced with a Preparatory Prayer, and two Preludes, which may be made thus:—

PREPARATORY PRAYER: "Assist me, O Lord, in this Meditation, that, during the course of it, all the thoughts of my mind, all the affections of my heart, and all the operations of my body and soul, may tend purely and wholly to thy greater honour and glory, and to the advancement of my own and neighbour's salvation."

PRELUDE I. Excite a vivid idea of God's presence, humbling yourself before him; and construct in your mind some scene suitable to the subject of your Meditation.

PRELUDE II. Pray for the special fruits of the Meditation which you are going to make.

Then go through the different *Points* of the Meditation, 1st, by thinking, or trying to think, on the truth which you have chosen, so as to convince yourself of its importance; i.e., of the importance and necessity of living according to it;—2ndly, by applying that truth to yourself; i.e., by examining your thoughts, words,

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actions, and omissions, and comparing them with the truth upon which you are meditating, so as to see how far you fall short of your duty;—3rdly, by lamenting all your past deficiences; and making a firm and practical resolution, that your life shall correspond in future with the subject of your meditation;—4thly, by praying most earnestly for grace to fulfil your resolution.

This prayer is called the Colloquy; and you will find a special one placed at the end of each of these Meditations. After which you may say some or all of the following prayers, according to your time and devotion:—

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—

"Soul of Christ, sanctify me;
Body of Christ, save me;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;
Water flowing from the side of Christ, purify me;
Passion of Christ, comfort me.
O good Jesus, hear me;
Hide me in thy wounds;
Never permit me to be separated from thee;
From the malignant enemy defend me;
At the hour of my death call mc,
And cause me to come to thee,
That with the Saints I may praise thee,
For everlasting ages."

"Receive, O Lord, the oblation of my entire liberty—I give it up to thee without reserve: Accept my memory, my understanding, and my will, that they may be employed wholly for thee. Whatever I have, whatever I am, is thy gift; all this I now restore to thee, subjecting it totally to the disposal of thine adorable will. One only thing I beg of thee to bestow—give me a love of thee, together with thy grace; I am then sufficiently rich, and nothing more do I ask."

VOICE OF GOD

TO THE HEART OF HIS SERVANTS.

MEDITATION I.

Being a Preparatory Meditation, intended to excite the Soul to a determined Resolution of profiting by those that follow.

EJACULATION: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? My heart is ready to do thy will."

St. Ignatius says of his Spiritual Exercises, (and the same may be said of these Meditations,) that he who undertakes them will be most powerfully assisted by God, if he enters upon them with a generous soul, offering the desires of his heart, and his whole self, to his Creator.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Give ear to Almighty God saying to you by his prophet: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father; and forsake not the law of thy mother: that grace

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may be added to thy head, and a chain of gold to thy neck." And consider the Director of your meditations or spiritual exercises, as the Father here spoken of; and give your whole soul to hear and adopt his instructions.—Consider the Church as your Mother, feeding and strengthening you with the means of grace, that so you may keep the divine laws which she proposes to you;—Consider how you have forsaken these laws of your Mother by sin; and, in order that you may not forsake them any more, but may return now effectually to your days give your whale bear that you way whele heart and seed to the seed to t duty, give your whole heart and soul to make these Meditations in such a manner, as to lument sincerely all the evils of your past life,—to resolve upon doing better in future,—and to adopt such measures as may render your resolutions practical and effectual. Say now generously from your heart: "I will not be a degenerate son; I will be diligent, and as exact as possible, in these Meditations."

Point II. Give ear to the fearful threat of Jesus Christ: "The men of Ninive shall rise up in judgment against this generation, and shall condemn it, because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas." And

¹ Prov. i. 8, 9.

² Matt. xii. 41.

fear that this threat may be executed upon you, if you should go through your Medi-tations without proper fruit—without sincere repentance, without real amendment. Many Christians, who will have profited by less means than are offered to you, will show the justice of your condemnation, if, through sloth, or negligence, or indifference, you lose the fruits of the opportunities which you possess. If any one of the poor souls could come now from Purgatory; and much more, if any one could come from hell, and could have the opportunity, which you now have, of profiting by these Meditations; oh! how exact, how diligent, how fervent that soul would be! If you should be permitted to come again after death, and to have the present opportunity; would you be negligent, slothful, or indifferent? what you would do then, do now; i. e., meditate diligently, fervently, &c.,-lament your sins, and implore forgiveness,—resolve upon an entire new life,—and adopt the means of persevering in your resolutions, &c. &c.

POINT III. Give ear to the Holy Ghost saying to you by his Apostle: "Receive not the grace of God in vain: Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation." And consider, that, as

^{3 2} Cor. vi. 1, 2.

you know not the number of your days, you do not know whether these may not be the last Meditations, which you will be allowed make—whether you will live to make any ore, or whether God has not attached to our fidelity and diligence in making them, those efficacious graces without which you will not obtain the grace of final perseverance. Since you are left in complete ignorance of these things, infer therefrom, that you should go through these Exercises, as if they were to be your last. In doubts respecting salvation, take the safe side: do, therefore, what you would do, if these were the last Meditations which you would live to make.

Collogur.—O God of infinite wisdom, who enlightenest every man that cometh into this world; dispel the darkness and delusions of my mind, and cure the insensibility of my heart, that I may see and feel the importance of labouring earnestly for my salvation. Open the eyes of my understanding, that I may know the things that are for my peace. Assist me in my meditations, and dart into my soul the rays of thy divine light, that I may know both thee and myself—that I may understand what I ought to do for thy glory, and for my own and neighbour's salvation. And having given me the grace to resolve to do my entire duty,

give me the grace also to accomplish what I resolve. Amen.

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—" Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION I.

On a Perfect Intention, which should precede our Actions.

Theological and Spiritual Writers teach, that, for our actions to be meritorious, there is required an intention, at least virtual, of doing them for God; i.e., our actions must be done for God, either by an actual intention at the time; or, at least, by virtue of a former intention, which still morally exists, influencing and causing the present action. Thus, all your actions will be meritorious during the day, if, in the morning, you make an actual intention for all that day, of doing your actions for God: all your actions will follow from this intention and will be influenced by it, unless you retract or interrupt it, by a contrary intention.

Some Divines go further, asserting, that this intention of doing all our actions for God, is not only necessary for rendering them meritorious, but that it is even of pre-

cept—that it comes under the precept of charity. St Paul says: "Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever else you do; do all to the glory of God:"4 and St. Thomas of Aquin speaks of these words as containing a command; 5 and he says: "To refer all our actions to God by a virtual intention, falls under a precept."* There is a command of loving God with our whole heart, and soul, and strength; and St. Thomas says, that the referring all our actions to God, at least by a virtual intention, is included in this command: they must be, at least, so far referred to God, that, if you were asked the question: "Are you doing this action for God? do you wish to serve and honour God by this action?" You would be in proper disposition to answer: "Yes, that is my wish and intention."

In order to satisfy this duty, you should

In order to satisfy this duty, you should accustom yourself to repeat frequently these or similar words: "I offer to thee, O Lord, this action."

When St. Paul, in his Epistle, exhorts the Ephesians to perfect charity, he tells them how he prayed that they "might be able

^{4 1} Cor. x. 31. 5 2. 2. q. 69. a. 1.

^{*&}quot;Virtualiter referre omnia in Deum, cadit sub precepto charitatis."—Vide 1. 2. q. 100. a. 10.

to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is its breadth, and length, and height, and depth." We may say also of a perfect Intention, (as belonging to charity,) that it has, in like manner, its Breadth, and Length, and Height, and Depth.

I. THE BREADTH OR LATITUDE OF A PERFECT INTENTION.

- 1. Its Breadth or Latitude extends to the whole Action, and to all its Circumstances. For if, in our fulfilment of the divine law, one tittle shall not be passed over; 7 so, in our serving and honouring God by our works, the least thing ought not to be allowed to pass, without being offered to God.
- 2. It extends to the whole Man, with all his powers and faculties both of body and soul; so that he should intend to serve and honour God with his whole self. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and let all that is within me, bless his holy name." 8
- 3. It extends to all the Fruits to be derived from our actions, which are principally these five, viz.: 1st, The fruit of Adoration and Praise: "Whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the

⁴ Eph. iii. 18. ⁷ Matt. v. 18. ⁸ Ps. cii. 1.

glory of God."9 2ndly, The fruit of *Thanks-giving*; for, to do works pleasing to God, is a real thanksgiving. 3rdly, The fruit of Satisfaction or Atonement; for, that this fruit is attached to every good work of the just, is taught in the words which are pronounced immediately after Sacramental Absolution: "May all the good thou shalt perform, and all the evil thou shalt suffer, be to thee for the remission of the stars."* i.e., for the remission of the temporal pun-ishment of them. 4thly, The fruit of *Im*petration, or them. 4thly, The Iruit of Impetration, or the obtaining of additional graces and blessings; for, between the just man and God, there is this compact: "I do, that thou mayst give." God has himself made this compact: "If thou do well, shalt thou not receive?" 5thly, The fruit of merit, whereby, through God's promise, we become *entitled* to an increase of grace and glory; for, that the works of the *just* man have this *merit* attached to them, is also taught in the words following Absolution:
"May all the good thou shalt perform, and all the evil thou shalt suffer, be to thee for an increase of grace, and for the reward

^{9 1} Cor. x. 31. 10 Gen. iv. 7.

^{*} Quidquid boni feceris, et mali sustinueris, sint tibi in remissionem peccatorum."

of eternal life;"* and it has been defined, moreover, by the General Council of Trent.11

- 4. It extends to, and contains, the Motives of all virtues; i.e., whatever good and virtuous motives can influence us to do any particular action, we should wish and intend to have all those motives in doing that action: so that, by this means, each action will be a practice of all virtues; as, for example, contrition is an act, not only of penance and hatred of sin, but also of charity.
- 5. It extend to all possible ferrour and devotion, love of God, and desire of his greater glory; according to these words of Ecclesiasticus: "Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can; for he will yet far exceed:.... blessing the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for he is above all praise." 12

II. THE LENGTH OF A PERFECT INTENTION.

Its Length refers to duration; and extends,

1. To our whole life, and to each moment of it: "I will praise my God as long as I shall be." 13

¹² Eccli. xliii. 32, 33.

^{*} Quidquid boni feceris, et mali sustinueris sint tibi in augmentum gratiæ, et præmium vitæ æternæ.

- 2. To all eternity, that we may glorify God "from henceforth, now, and for ever." "We will walk in the name of our God for ever and ever." 14
- 3. To will and do something for God's sake, once for always; herein imitating God, whose word, once uttered, endureth for ever: "My word shall not pass away;" i.e., it has been spoken once, and that once is to stand good for ever.

4. To the retractation of all past time, not employed for God: Thus St. Augustin wished to cut off from his life all the time, during which he had not loved God.

III. THE DEPTH OF A PERFECT INTENTION.

Its Depth refers to humiliation; and extends,

- 1. To the estimation of one's self according to the measure of our own vileness and nothingness; like David: "From the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord." 16
- 2. To the retractation and compensation of every evil, committed by one's self or others.
- 3. To the desire of compensating God, by our actions, for the praise and honour which the reprobate in hell refuse him.

¹⁴ Micheas iv. 5. 15 Mark xiii. 31. 16 Ps. cxxix. 1.

IV. THE HEIGHT OF A PERFECT INTENTION.

Its Height refers to union of will, and should be such as to raise it.

1. To a union with all the Saints in their acts and intentions. Thus, in the Canon of the Mass, we say: "Upon which (our gifts) vouchsafe to look propitiously, and to accept them, as thou wert pleased to accept the gifts of thy just servant Abel, &c."

2. To a union with the blessed Virgin

2. To a union with the blessed Virgin Mary, by wishing to act like her; i.e., to please and honour God perfectly in our ac-

tions.

3. To a union with Jesus Christ, by offering to God all that we do, through him, and in him; and by conforming ourselves, in all things, to his example: "All whatsoever you do, in word or in work; all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to the Father by him." 17

4 To a union also with God himself, by wishing to do and to offer all our actions, according to his entire will and pleasure; i. e., because he wills them,—and solely for his sake, or because he is the Sovereign Good, who made all things for himself.

17 Coloss. iii. 17.

MEDITATION II.

On the End for which Man was Created.

EJACULATION: "O Lord, make me know my end."

St. Ignatius says: "Man was created for this end— That he might praise, and love, and serve his God; and might thereby be saved."

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Listen to the admonition of the Prophet: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" And consider what you are, and what you owe to the Almighty. 1, God created you originally from nothing: what were you, therefore, before you received from God your present existence? as to your soul, a complete nothing; as to your body, mere earth, and that earth was originally nothing.—2, God has drawn you out of nothing, in preference to innumerable other possible creatures, which are still left in their nothing.—3, In giving you a being, he did not make you a reptile, or a beast, or a monster, as he has made so many other

¹⁸ Mal. ii. 10.

creatures.—4, He so regulated by his Providence, that you should be born, not before the coming of Christ,—not at the time of the Deluge,—not a Heathen, or a Jew, or a Heretic,—but a Christian, and a Catholic;—nor has he deferred your birth to the dangerous times of Antichrist.—5, In giving you existence, he has exercised his goodness towards you still further, by making you to his own image and likeness; for he has enobled you with a scul, which is spiritual and immortal,—capable of acquiring some imitation of his divine perfections,—and destined for the possession of himself, in supreme and endless happiness.

From these reflections, infer:-

1. If you are from nothing—if, originally, you are nothing; therefore, arrogate to yourself nothing,—esteem yourself as not being above mere nothing,—and desire to be esteemed in the same manner by others, i. e., as a worthless nothing.

2. Since, in giving you existence, God has bestowed upon you such great distinctions, above so many other creatures; you see what love and service you owe him, for these special favours—how devoted you ought to be to his will and pleasure.

3. Since you are spiritual, and are thereby elevated far above all the rest of the visible

creation; therefore, lower not yourself any more to the rank of a mere animal, by giving your attention so entirely to the body, taking so little care of your soul.

- 4. Since you are immortal; do not, therefore, employ and waste your noble faculties so much in the pursuit of what is merely temporal.
- 5. Since your soul is an image of God, capable of being perfected; do not, therefore, disfigure and defile this image by sin, and so render your soul incapable of that happy union with him, for which it was created.

Point II. Listen to the humiliating warning of Jesus Christ: "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit." And consider the fruits of your nothing. 1, With regard to your soul, its natural fruits are: ignorance, error, anxieties, inconstancy, predominant passions, &c.;—2, With regard to your body, its natural fruits are: all kinds of diseases, and death; for these, although they may not be always actually present with you, belong nevertheless to your nothing—to the mortal nature of your body—they are its radical fruits;—3, The moral fruits of your nothing are: inclinations to all possible sins,—and all

¹⁹ Matt. vii. 18.

the innumerable sins which you have committed, and on account of which you deserve (and more than deserve) to be reduced to your original nothing.

From these reflections, infer:-

- 1. That, considering the mortal nature of your body as the punishment of sin, you ought to be ready to suffer any kind of diseases, and any kind of death, according to the will of your Creator.
- 2. That, on account of your moral nothingness, i.e., your sinfulness, nothing is due to you but infinite contempt, eternal hatred, debasement, abandonment, persecution, and punishments of every kind and degree; and therefore, if any of these things happen to you, you should receive them contentedly, as your due.

Point III. Reflect practically on these words of Almighty God: "Every one that calleth upon my name, I have created him for my glory." And consider why you were created by God, and why you have received from him such noble faculties above other visible creatures. I, The purpose for which you were created by God, is (not to lead a useless life, by serving the body or your passions, but) "that you might praise,

²⁰ Is. xliii. 7.

and love, and serve your God during life; and might thereby be saved," and so be happy with him for all eternity.—2, The purpose for which you were made a Christian is, that by making a proper use of the sacraments and other means of grace, you might imitate Christ by the constant practice of virtue.—3, The purpose for which you have been called to be, in a more special manner, Christ's disciple—to be a Catholic, is, that you might serve God like an angel on earth; so that you might be able to say with St. Paul: I live—no, it is not now I that live; but it is Christ that liveth in me.²¹

From these reflections, infer:—

That, as to the end for which you live, you are not man, but rather an animal, unless your life be such as to be a praise, and love, and service of your Creator.
 That you are not a Christian, if you

2. That you are not a Christian, if you do not, in some way, imitate Christ—if you do not labour to imitate him as far as you

can.

3. That you are not a true Catholic—not a real disciple of Christ, if your life be not a perpetual violence to nature or self-love,—if you do not labour to serve God in inno-

cence and virtue-in a continual hunger and thirst after justice or perfection.

Examine what your life has been,—re-

pent,-resolve,-amend, &c.

Collowy.—Thou hast made me, O Lord, for thyself; and my heart cannot rest, unti it repose in thee. Oh! what gratitude, what love and service do I owe thee, for having love and service do I owe thee, for having created me for the possession and enjoyment of thyself—for a happy eternity! But alas! blinded by my passions, I have lived hitherto in the pursuit of perishable creatures, "I have loved vanity, and sought after empty delusions." Thy grace has now undeceived me. Henceforth I will seek happiness by achieve the attain seeking thee—by labouring for the attainment of that end for which I was created. I will love and serve thee faithfully, during the remainder of my life, that I may love and enjoy thee during an endless eternity. Assist me, O Lord, to fulfil this my resolution; for, without thee, I can do nothing.

"Our Father."-" Hail Mary."-" Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION IIL

On the Means for arriving at our End.

EJACULATION: "Lord, make me know my end, and teach me the means of obtaining it."

St. Ignatius says: "But all other things on earth were created for the use of man, that he might use them as means for arriving at his last end."

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I.—Reflect practically on these words of St. Paul: "We know that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain, even till now." And consider how all creatures are given to us by God, as means or helps to salvation; and how they seem to groan and be in pain, unless we use them for this end; for the abuse or misuse of creatures brings nothing but misery—they seem to cry out to us continually, that we should tend towards God, who is our last end.

Bom. viii. 22

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God has made for us so many different degrees of creatures, in order that, ascending by them, as by so many steps, we might be enabled to arrive at *Him*: He has spread out over our heads the spacious heavens, with all their ponderous and countless orbs, that we might be brought to learn, an i praise, and love his Immensity; and might he forced to see and acknowledge our own insignificancy and nothingness;—He has lighted up the sun, and moon, and other planets, that we might be led by them to admire, and might long to behold, the enraptur-ing splendours of his inaccessible light; and that we might be brought also to consider and lament our own darkness, and spiritual ignorance;—He has commanded the earth to bring forth its variety and abundance of fruits, that we might learn therefrom, how we ought to produce the fruits of sanctity which God requires from us; and might be impelled to praise, and thank, and love his infinite goodness and bounty,—and to detest our sinfulness in making him such an ungrateful return;—He has given us a body, that, by restraining and mortifying its appetites, we might obtain graces and merits, and so save our soul;—He has given us a soul, that, soaring above mere earthly and material things, we might love, desire, and pursue such things as are spiritual and hearenly;—He has furnished our soul with these high and noble faculties which we possess, that we might be enabled to succeed in our pursuit of real happiness—in the final attainment of *Him*, our last end.

POINT II.—Reflect on these words of the eternal Father: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."23 And consider how Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, is the chief means of your salvation. He is "the way, the truth, and the life." In giving Him to you, God has denied you nothing: for in Him you have all the treasures of grace, of doctrine, of example, of perfection, and of merits;—in Him you have efficacious means of profiting by these heavenly treasures; for in Him you have the sacrifice of the altar, the sacraments, and prayer which he allows to be offered in his name. If you are weak and languid in soul for want of support, he is your strength and spiritual nourishment;
—if your soul is wounded, or even dead in sin, he is your sure remedy-your resurrection to a new and spiritual life;—if you are surrounded on all sides by dangers, or at-tacked by powerful enemies who threaten

^{23 2} Pet. i. 17.

your ruin, he is your protector—your safe defence, bidding you not fear.

Infer, from all this, how severe will be

Infer, from all this, how severe will be your condemnation, if you do not profit by these powerful means of salvation, which you have in Christ; or if you do not make that use of them, which you ought. And examine what use you have made of them—of his graces,—and example,—of the sacraments,—and sacrifice of the mass,—of his sufferings,—and death; and consider what use you ought to make of them in future; and resolve accordingly.

Point III.—Reflect on these words of your Saviour, pointing out to you another most powerful means of salvation: "Behold thy Mother." And consider how the Mother of Jesus is given to you, to be your Mother; to be your Intercessor with her divine Son—your Advocate to plead your cause before the throne of mercy and grace. Christ, our Lord, dispenses to you his blessings through the hands of Mary; and receives your prayers and your sighs, through her intercession;—through her intercession, he averts from you his anger,—removes dangers,—withdraws you from occasions of sin,—bestows efficacious graces against temptations,

²⁴ John xix. 27.

—and restricts the enemy from tempting you, as far as he would.

Infer, from all this, how much you are indebted to the Blessed Virgin Mary! what gratitude you owe her! how frequently and fervently you ought to have recourse to her powerful assistance! and what confidence you should place in her intercession!

Colloque.—O Jesus, my Redeemer, shall not love and gratitude force me henceforth to serve thee faithfully and diligently; since thou hast hitherto served, and still continuest to serve me, not only in so many of thy creatures, but even in thy own person, and in that of thy blessed Mother, whom thou hast given to be my Mother? Oh! if there be in my heart any attachments which are not directed to thy love and service, enable me effectually to eradicate them, that I may be in a condition to give myself wholly to thee! for I would rather not exist, than not give my whole self to love and serve thee. Amen.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—"Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION IV.

On Seeking God, our last End; and Employing the Means of coming to the Possession of him.

EJACULATION: "Thou hast declared, O Lord, that but one thing is necessary; oh, give me grace to accomplish that one necessary thing."

St. Ignatius says of creatures, that "we should use or reject them, according as they serve to advance or hinder us in the attainment of our end," which, as regards the present life, is the love and service of God; and, as regards the next, the possession of him in eternal happiness.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Give ear to the Psalmist expressing his longing desires after God: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God! When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" 25 And consider, that God, the Sovereign Good, who is infinitely happy

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²⁵ Ps. xli. 2, 3.

in himself, was moved with a desire of communicating himself, or happiness, to other beings; that, actuated with this desire, he has created man (you amongst the rest). He created you, then, for happiness—for the love and enjoyment of himself in the kingdom of heaven: This, therefore, is your last end—it is your supreme good—your only good.—God did not, however, put you in immediate possession of your last end—of your supreme and only good, at your first coming into existence; but, for a time, he has placed you here on earth, in a state of trial, in order that, after having loved and served him—after having sought him in your thoughts, words, and actions, during your mortal life, you might then receive that supreme happiness for which you were created, as a reward of your virtues: "Walk before me, and be perfect;" and "I am thy reward exceeding great." The only end, then, for which you are now living on earth, is, to seek God, the one infinite good—to be always striving to please him, and come to the secure possession of him in the kingdom of his glory. Every other pursuit, not re-ferred to this, is mere delusion; it is forsaking the only end for which you live; and it is making yourself restless and unhappy.

⁵⁶ Gen. xvii. 1; and xv. 1.

Point II.—You seek God, and therefore happiness, by practising virtue—by labouring to perfect the image of God in your soul. This is your end as to the present life, viz., to prepare and fit yourself for your last end—for an eternal union with your Creator in heaven. To accomplish your end as to this life, you must be continually labouring for your own perfection—for the perfecting of the image of God in your soul. But this cannot be effected, without sanctituing argues, because without it your soul fying grace; because, without it, your soul cannot be pleasing to God, nor ever be united to him You must therefore obtain united to him You must therefore obtain sanctifying grace;—you must preserve it, when obtained;—and for this purpose (i.e., to be able to preserve it), you must be diligent in labouring to increase and multiply it: "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds." ——All this you must do, because you are obliged to sanctify your own soul—to be perfect yourself; and also because you are obliged, by good example, &c., to contribute to the edification of others: "So let your light shine before men, that seeing your good works, they may glorify your l'ather who is in heaven."28

²⁷ Luke xix. 16.

²⁸ Matt. v. 16.

POINT III .- In order to succeed in accomplishing this work of your own perfec-tion—in order to effect the sanctification of your own soul, and so be in a condition to contribute effectually to the sanctification of others, you must put in practice the means which are necessary for this purpose.

Those means are,

1. Not to desire or use creatures, except in as much as they serve to lead you to God:-

2. To live in the determination of avoiding whatever God forbids; viz., all mortal sins, which would lead you completely from your last end; and also all venial sins, which would retard you in your way to it, and put you in danger of losing it altogether:-

3. To live in the constant pursuit of those

3. To live in the constant pursuit of those virtues, which are proper for your state of life: and to be always labouring for the sanctification of your soul;—

4. Except the supernatural gifts of grace and virtues, to consider all other things as indifferent; because they may be either helps, or hinderances to you, according as you make a good or an evil use of them. For example, poverty and riches, humiliations and honours, sickness and health, adversity and prosperity may any of them be versity and prosperity, may any of them be means, in the designs of God, for leading

you to sanctity. You should be ready, therefore, to receive from him whichever of these things he may please to send you, because he knows which of them is the best for you;—

5. To make a good and diligent use of the supernatural means of grace, which God has appointed in his Church; such as prayer,—the sacraments,—the sacrifice of the mass,—the guidance of your spiritual Director, &c.

Director, &c.

As soon as you begin to practise these means in good earnest, then you will be seeking God effectually,—you will perfect his image in your soul,—and you will arrive finally at the secure possession of him, in the enjoyment of that eternal happiness, for which you are created. Lament, therefore, your past neglect of these means of salvation,—resolve effectually to live in the constant practice of them, during the whole remainder of your life,—and pray for grace to do so.

Colloguy.—I acknowledge, O Lord, that I can do nothing of what I ought to do, without thine assistance. In vain, therefore, shall I resolve, unless thou add grace to my resolution—unless "to the work of thy hands thou reach out thy right hand." I wish, indeed, to serve thee as I ought; but.

of myself, I cannot accomplish my desire. Having given me now to will that which is good, give me also the power to do it—to walk constantly in the path of thy commandments without blame. Help me, O Lord, by thy grace; for, without thy special assistances, I shall not be able to fulfil this my resolution; nor to serve thee so, as to arrive at the end for which I was created.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION II.

On the efficacious Means of acquiring and practising Christian Virtues, and of advancing and persevering until Death in the Practice of them.

I. The Archangel Raphael, "one of the seven spirits who stand before the Lord,"29 having descended on earth, announced to man the summary of a spiritual life, in these words: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."30 These words express those efficacious means of virtue or perfection, which

Dobias xii. 15.

³⁰ Tobias xii. 8.

should be your daily practice. The Archangel commended holy Tobias for having lived in the constant practice of these means; and showed him, that he had thereby found access to the throne of mercy and grace: "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst leave thy dinner, and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer to the Lord." If, then, you would find acceptance with God, and would draw down upon you his graces and blessings, prayer, fasting, and alms, i.e., acts of piety, mortification, and charity, must be the constant practice of your life: no one of these will be effectual without the other two—they be effectual without the other two-they must go all three together.

When the Wise Men from the East were led by heaven to pay homage to Jesus Christ, they were divinely directed to make christ, they were divinely directed to make him such offerings as signify the practice of a perfect life. Now the gifts which they offered him, were the very same as are recommended by the Archangel Raphael—they were frankincense, myrrh, and gold, 32 by which are signified, Prayer, Mortification, and works of Charity.

If these three means or practices of a virtuous life be neglected, then your salvation is in very great danger; but if they be

³¹ Tobias xii. 12.

^{*} Matt. ii. 11.

properly attended to, then it is secure. You cannot receive the reward of eternal life, without good works; now these are called, by excellence, "the three Eminent good works;" and, by living in the daily practice of them, you will be laying up for yourself continually rich treasures in heaven.³³ Resolve, therefore, to begin, from this time, to apply yourself to them fervently, diligently, and with unceasing perseverance.

II Consider now the extent of what the Archangel recommends to your constant practice, when he says: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms:"—

1. The word "PRAYER" has a very comprehensive meaning; and implies a practice of many great virtues. As one condition of prayer is attention to the presence of God; and as our blessed Lord says, that "We ought always to pray, and not to faint;" to follows, that, in the duty of Prayer, is contained a constant attention to the presence of God. Another condition of prayer is confidence in the goodness and promises of him, to whom it is addressed; and therefore the duty of Prayer includes a continual practice of the theological virtues of Faith

Vide Cat. Conc. Trid.
 part. 4, cap. 2; et cap.
 Luke xviii. 1.

and Hope—a perpetual reliance on divine Providence. Another condition of prayer is, that it should be accompanied with an humble sense of your own nothingness, and innumerable wants; and therefore it contains a perpetual practice of the great virtue of humility, which is the foundation and guardian of every other. Another condition of prayer is, that it should be fervent—that you should ardently desire the blessings you snould ardently desire the blessings which you implore; and therefore the duty of prayer includes (and also produces) a perpetual "hunger and thirst after justice." One constant subject of your prayers should be, to implore forgiveness for your daily transgressions; and as these supplications for mercy should be accompanied with a correct for having offended God and with sorrow for having offended God, and with a determination to offend him no more; and as this sorrow and determination should proceed from a love of God; therefore the duty of prayer includes the constant practice of the theological virtue of charity, to-gether with a perpetual hatred of sin, and of the occasions that lead to it. The duty of prayer includes, moreover, daily devotion to the Angels and Saints, particularly to your Angel Guardian, and the blessed Virgin Mary;—devotion to the Passion of Christ,— devout attention at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and at the other public Services of the

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Church,—and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and holy Communion. It includes also the practice of frequent spiritual reading,—and more especially the regular habit of daily meditation,—and of frequently raising your mind and heart to God, by ejaculatory prayers.

You see, then, what is comprehended in the great and important duty of prayer. But in this you will never succeed, without the practice of the other two means, viz.: mortification and charity, which are necessary accompaniments of prayer.

2. The word "FASTING" has also a com-

2. The word "fasting" has also a comprehensive meaning; for it extends to every species of Mortification, both external or of the senses, and internal or of the passions.

Mortification is the propitatory part of prayer, removing the obstacles which stand in the way between us and God's mercy. We are sinners, and must therefore do something to propitiate God's justice, in order to draw down upon us the effects of his mercy; and thus it is that "prayer is good" or effectual, when joined "with fasting" or mortification. And as we are not only sinners, but daily sinners; we should therefore perform acts of propitiation every day.

But besides thus mortifying yourself in atonement of your past sins, you are con-

stantly under the necessity of mortifying your senses and your passions, as a preservation also against future transgressions. For St. Paul declares, that, "if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if, by the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."35 And our blessed Lord also positively says: "Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Thus, then, the duty of mortification contains a constant practice of the virtues of penance,hatred of all sin,—and submission to the divine law, by a continual employment of the means of keeping it. It contains also a perpetual exercise of the virtue of humility, because it is a practical acknowledgment of the natural corruption of your heart, and that, instead of consolations, you deserve nothing but chastisements, on account of your sinfulness.

By the spirit and continual practice of mortification, "you present your body a living sacrifice to God, holy and pleasing" in his sight;³⁷ and are constantly laying up for yourself rich treasures of merit in heaven, far more precious than those of gold

and silver.

3. The word "ALMS" comprehends all sorts of kindnesses and acts of charity,

³⁵ Rom. viii. 13. 36 Luke xiii. 5. 37 Rom. xii. 1.

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which you can do towards your neighbour. These may be called the *impetratory* part of prayer, and are necessary for inducing Almighty God to continue to you his special graces. When you address your prayers to God, you present yourself before him in the character of a needy mendicant, begging for assistance or relief—you wish to induce Almighty God to be kind and charitable in bestowing upon you the helps you stand in need of; but, as a condition for yielding to your petitions, he requires (if the expression be allowable) that you should set him the example, by being kind and charitable yourself in bestowing upon your neighbour the

self in bestowing upon your neighbour the helps which he stands in need of from you.

The kindnesses and acts of charity which you should exercise towards your neighbour, are the works of mercy both corporal and

spiritual.

As to the corporal works of mercy, God strictly requires us to exercise them, as a means of our obtaining his graces and blessings. "I command thee," he says, "to open thy hand to thy poor and needy brother." "Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass, that the face of the Lord shall not be turned

³⁶ Deut. xv. 11.

from thee." Give, and it shall be given to you—good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." The divine favours, therefore, will not fail to attend you, if you comply with this command of charity; for, whilst "he that despiseth the entreaty of the poor shall suffer want;" he that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and the Lord will repay him."42 "The Lord maketh recompense, and will give thee seven times us much."43 And to excite you to the greatest confidence in these promises, the Almighty even says: "Try me in this—if I do not open to you the floodgates of heaven, and pour you out a blessing even to abundance."44 The corporal works of mercy are of such necessity and importance, and they are so advantageous to those who exercise them, that Christ will attribute your sentence, at the last day, to your having performed or neglected them. For he will say to them that shall be on his right hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the king-dom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me

²⁹ Tobias iv. 7. ⁴¹ Prov. xxviii, 27. ⁴³ Eccli. xxxv. 13. ⁴⁰ Luke vi. 38. ⁴² Prov. xix. 17. ⁴⁴ Mal. iii. 10.

in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me." For, "as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." Then shall he say to them also that shall be on his left hand: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire: For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat, &c." What stronger motives can you have, to urge you to the practice of these works of mercy?

But the exercise of fraternal charity extends, not only to the relieving of the corporal, but also of the spiritual wants of your neighbour: and indeed, these are of far greater importance; and they are much more advantageous to those who exercise them. If, then, the blessings of God in this life, and the reward of eternal happiness in the next, are promised to those who are charitable in relieving the corporal wants of their neighbour, what will be the recompense of those whose charity leads them to a constant and diligent practice of the spiritual works of mercy? Certainly their recompense will be a continual and more abundant supply of God's special graces, and of his choicest blessings, during life; and a higher degree of glory in heaven,

⁴⁵ Matt, xxv. 34 to 46.



for all eternity. "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." "They who instruct others unto justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity." To contribute to the salvation of your neighbour, is the greatest act of charity that you can do for him.

Be diligent in the exercise of these works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual. For, by this means, you will be "laying up for yourself treasures in heaven;" 48 you will, "by good works, be making your calling and election sure;" 49 and there will be "laid up for you a crown of justice" in the next life, "which the just Judge will render unto you." 50 For, whilst Almighty God declares, that he will exercise "judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy;" 51 he assures us, on the other hand, that "blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." 52

III. The object of these Meditations is, to lead you to the spirit and constant practice of these three eminent good works—

⁴⁶ James v. 20. 49 2 Pet. i. 10. 52 Matt. v. 7.

⁴⁷ Dan. xii. 3. ⁵⁰ 2 Tim. iv. 8. ⁴⁸ Matt. vi. 20. ⁵¹ James ii. 13.

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prayer, mortification, and charity; that, by offering to God continually your gifts of frankincense, myrrh, and gold, you may learn, from your own happy experience, that "prayer is indeed good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

It would be well, if a meditation, on one of these three subjects, were made very frequently during life; because they contain the practice of a spiritual life; and because one hour's practice is worth more than a whole life of mere theory or speculation,

without practice.

Having pondered well in your heart the contents of this Consideration, make your resolutions accordingly; and pour forth your soul in fervent supplications to God, for grace to fulfil your resolutions; deploring your past neglect of these three means of virtue; and lamenting the spiritual losses which you have sustained by goal and applicate. which you have sustained by such neglect.

It is hoped that the necessity and efficacy of these three means of virtue will be a sufficient apology for the repetition of them, which, in some way or other, will occur in almost every subsequent meditation. For, your object in meditating is, or should be, to force yourself to the practice of your duties towards God, towards yourself, and towards your neighbour, i.e., to the practice of prayer, mortification, and charity, taken in their comprehensive meaning.

MEDITATION V.

On the terrible Enormity of Mortal Sin;—on the Measure of Iniquities,—and of Graces.

EJACULATION: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin; for it is great."

St. Ignatius says: "In meditating on this subject, I ought to seek self-confusion; considering how many men have been condemned eternally for only one mortal sin; whilst I have so often deserved condemnation, for the many and grievous sins which I have committed."

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Attend to the voice of the Almighty admonishing you of the terrible consequences of sin: "Know thou, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God; and that my fear is not with thee; saith the Lord God of Hösts." And consider what a great evil you commit, when you consent to a mortal

⁵³ Jer. ii. 19.

sin-when you leave your Sovereign Good, your last End, by mortal sin!

- 1. Mortal sin is as essentially evil, as God is essentially good; because it is directly opposite to God—it is opposed to all his Attributes. God is infinite goodness, sin is the extremity of evil;—God is infinite mercy, sin is cruelty;—God is Omnipotence, sin is weakness;—God is Holiness, sin is abomination;—Godis Wisdom, sin is folly;—God is infinite Perfection, sin is essentially imperfection, &c.
- 2. Mortal sin disfigures and destroys the image of God in your soul; making you the image of his enemy, the devil.
- 3. Mortal sin is destructive of the merits of Christ, rendering them void in your regard: as far as in it lies, it crucifies again the Lord of glory, and tramples under foot the blood by which he redeemed you.
- 4. Mortal sin destroys all your merits; and also your power of meriting by anything you do, so long as you remain under its guilt.
- 5. Mortal sin renders you, as to that time when you are defiled with its guilt, an object of hatred to God during the whole of eternity. For, as God loves his infinite perfections with an infinite love, so he always

hates what is opposed to them: "To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike."⁵⁴

6. Mortal sin renders your salvation ever after doubtful; because you can never be certain that you have received pardon, without a special revelation from God.

What a horror, therefore, you ought to have of this great evil; how you should fear and detest it; and how carefully you should avoid it!——Call to mind now the many times you have done evil in the sight of God,—Lament in the bitterness of your soul, &c.,—Resolve, &c.

Point II. Hear what Christ said to the impenitent Jews: "Fill up the measure of your fathers." And consider attentively the alarming truth which these words express. As God has fixed for each one of us the number of our days, so he has likewise fixed the measure of our iniquity—the amount of sin, beyond which he will not continue to us any longer the exercise of his forgiving mercy. God bears with the sinner, with a view to his repentance and amendment; but he bears with him only so long as the measure of his iniquities is not filled up: for, when that measure is com-

⁵⁴ Wisd. xiv. 9. 55 Matt. xxiii. 32.

pleted, then mercy gives place to justice; and the unhappy sinner is summoned out of life, and cast into eternal flames, to be there the wretched victim of God's omnipotent vengeance.-Now, if you commit another mortal sin, by that sin the measure of your iniquities may be filled up: will you, then, dare to commit it? How many have been condemned eternally, after their first sin? This was the case with Lucifer, and many thousands of Angels who sinned with him; -For only one sin, Adam was driven out of Paradise; For one sin, Cain was reprobated;—And Ananias and Saphira were struck dead, for the first sin which they committed after their conversion to the true religion. You see, therefore, how you ought to fear, and abhor sin,-how earnest you should be in avoiding it,—and how careful not to abuse God's mercy and forbearance in waiting for your repentance; lest his mercy should give place to the execution of his justice!

Point III. Weigh well these words of Christ addressed to Nicodemus: "The Spirit breatheth where he will." And consider the fearful truth which these words contain. God has not only determined the

⁵⁶ John iii. 8.

amount of sin beyond which the exercise of his mercy ceases, and that of his justice commences; but he has fixed also the measure of his graces with regard to each individual; and what that measure is, we know not. Perhaps the next sin you commit may provoke him to withdraw from you his special and efficacious graces; and so to deliver you up to a reprobate sense. Our blessed Lord tells us, that the kingdom of heaven is sometimes taken from those who abuse grace, and given to others who will turn it to a better account.⁵⁷ How careful, therefore, and diligent you should be, in profiting by the means of grace which you have; lest they should be taken away from you!——Call to mind now the many times that you have neglected and abused times that you have neglected and abused the means of grace which you have had; and the fearful condition of your soul in consequence of that abuse;—Lament your past negligence and guilt, and implore forgiveness;—resolve to renounce sin effectually, from this moment and for ever. And in order that you may be enabled to fulfil this your resolution, put in practice the three means pointed out to you by the Archangel Raphael: "Prayer," (i. e., fervent and persevering prayer) "is good"—it will be

⁵⁷ Matt. xxi. 43.

effectual against sin, if it be accompanied "with fasting"—with the constant practice of universal mortification, "and with alms"—with the diligent practice of universal charity; especially labouring, for the love of God and your neighbour, to bring souls to God. Resolve, therefore, upon the constant and diligent practice of these three efficacious means of virtue, which are remedies against sin, and are with reason called: "The three eminent good works."

Colloquy.—"O God, be merciful to me a sinner!" "For evils without number have surrounded me; and my iniquities have overtaken me—they are multiplied above the hairs of my head; and my heart hath forsaken me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: look down, O Lord, to help me." For so many years past, thou hast borne with me in my sins. I have been forsaking, despising, crucifying thee! Thou hast beheld my evils, restrained thy vengeance, waited for my repentance! Wretched sinner that I am! shall I still abuse thy patience, thy mercy? Shall I continue to be evil, because thou art good? Oh, unbounded goodness! Oh, infinite love of my God! how can I ever desert thee again by sin? Grant, O Lord, that I may suffer any

punishments, and even death itself, rather than offend thee any more. Give me such a horror of sin, that I may be able to say with thy prophet: "I have hated and abhorred iniquity, but I have loved thy law." To every temptation of the enemy, enable me to say, from my heart, with the holy Patriarch Joseph: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION VI.

On the Severity wherewith God has punished former Sinners.

EJACULATION: "O Lord, deal not with me according to my sins; but according to the multitude of thy tender mercies."

St. Ignatius, reminding us of the severe manner in which God has dealt with former sinners, endeavours to make us see and detest our own wickedness,—to bring us to a firm resolution of correcting it effectually,—and of regulating our life in future according to the law of God.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

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- Point I. Tremble at the awful threats which God, in his anger, has denounced against unrepenting sinners: "I will accomplish my fury; and will cause mine indignation to rest upon them." And, reflecting on the direful effects of this threat,
- 1. Consider how the divine indignation rested, and still rests, upon Lucifer, and upon the thousands who followed his example: those unhappy spirits fell from God only once; but that once was for ever! For divine revelation tells us, that, the moment they consented to that one sin, which was only in thought, they were hurled out of heaven without mercy; and, in exchange for that blissful abode, were plunged into an ocean of devouring flames, wherein they are doomed to feel eternally the whole weight of God's indignation resting heavily upon them.
- 2. Consider, moreover, how the divine indignation fell upon our first Parents in Paradise, and how heavily it still rests upon their posterity, in consequence of only one sin of disobedience: And from this you will see, how you ought to dread sin: and to fly from it with the greatest abhorrence, as from the face of a venomous serpent.—In Pa-

⁵⁸ Ezech. v. 13.

radise, our first Parents were in a state of innocence, and happiness, and immortality, until they sinned against God. That very instant in which they sinned, they lost their innocence, their happiness, and their immortality; being driven out of the paradise of pleasure, they were doomed to labours, and sufferings, and death; even to eternal death; -their understanding was darkened, their will perverted, the fire of concupiscence was lighted up within them, and their whole nature became corrupted. Thus their sin was an inexhaustible fountain of human woes; and of the bitter stream, which flows so copiously from that fountain of woes, we have still to drink: the ignorance, vice, want, miseries, diseases, and death, wherewith the whole earth is deluged, are, all of them, the sad consequences of sin.

3. Consider still further, how Almighty God, accomplishing his fury, has caused his indignation to fall at once, most severely, upon the whole human race, in punishment of sin; sometimes again upon a whole nation for one sin; sometimes upon entire cities, upon multitudes together, and upon private individuals.—See then how, in punishment of sin, and to show the fear we ought to have of it, nearly all mankind were

destroyed at once by a universal deluge; ⁵⁹—five large cities, by fire and brimstone from heaven; ⁶⁰—the whole Jewish nation, for one sin of one man, was afflicted with a dreadful pestilence, whereby 70,000 persons were destroyed; ⁶¹—Core, Dathan, and Abiron, with many others who joined in their sin, were swallowed down alive into hell, by the earth opening beneath their feet; and 14,700 more were destroyed by fire from heaven, for participating in the guilt of the same sin. ⁶²

These are not the only instances of the terrible effects of God's indignation upon sin. Both the Holy Scriptures and Ecclesiastical History abound with examples which show how evil and ruinous are the consequences of mortal sin,—how vehemently God must hate it,—how sincerely we ought to detest and lament it,—and how carefully and anxiously we ought to avoid it. And the last Day will show us, that, in the same manner as the Angels, immediately after their sin, were cast out of heaven into hell; so likewise many thousands of unhappy men have been struck dead in punishment of their crimes, and plunged into everlasting miseries.

Gen. vii. 21, 22, 23.
 Gen. xix. 24, 25.

^{61 2} Kings xxiv. 10, 15. 62 Numb. xvi. 31 to 35; 49.

POINT II. Tremble again in beholding the divine indignation punishing sin in another way; less severe indeed in appearance, but still more terrible in its consequences; because, by a withdrawal of graces, it leaves the sinner to multiply his sins, and thereby to bring upon himself a more terrible con-demnation: "Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and I heal them."63 Consider, attentively, the awful consequences of this fearful sentence! and see how God, in his anger, punishes sin by leaving the sinner to fall into other crimes, until he shall have sunk at length into the very depth of iniquity! By not repenting after sin, you render yourself unworthy of those special graces which are necessary for avoiding other sins; and you provoke God to withhold them from you. Then you go on from sin to sin, plunging deeper and deeper into vice, till the divine Justice overtakes you by a miserable death !---This withdrawal of graces, by which sinners be-come hardened in their crimes, increase their guilt, and die impenitent, is the most terrible punishment that can be in-

⁶³ Is. vi. 10.

flicted upon them in this life, on account of that immense treasure of wrath which it prepares for them hereafter.

Point III. Learn, therefore, the means of escaping it: "Be converted, and do penance for all your iniquities; and iniquity shall not be your ruin....For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; return ye and live."64 You see, in these words, the fruit that should be derived from reflecting on this subject: for the object of this Meditation is, to lead you to a hatred of sin above all other evils, and to a determined resolution to avoid it effectually in future. -A sincere hatred of sin is the first step towards avoiding it: But, unless you hate it above all other evils-above losses, pains, sickness, and even death itself; then you have not taken this first step. And, in order that you may take it-in order that you may conceive in your heart a real hatred of sin, you must reflect, (as you have been now doing,) frequently and seriously, on the enormity of this greatest of all evils, and on the punishments which God inflicts upon those who dare to commit it. --- If God did not spare his Angels, when they sinned; nor our first parents, who sinned; if he has not

⁶⁴ Ezech. xviii. 30, 32.

spared so many thousands of others, who were perhaps less guilty than you; can you expect that he will spare you, unless you repent now sincerely of your sins, and renounce them effectually? unless you return to him with your whole heart?

Lament, therefore, the evils of your past conduct;—crave pardon for those evils;—resolve to expiate them,—and to avoid them in future. But let your resolution be a practical one—such as will lead you at once to adopt the means of executing it, viz., the continual and simultaneous practice of Prayer, Mortification, and Charity: "Prayer is good with Fasting and Alms."

Colloquy.—O Jesus, my Redeemer! thou hast died upon the cross for the salvation of us sinners! I know, therefore, that thou "desirest not the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." By that bitter death, then, which thou hast so mercifully endured for my sake, I beg of thee not to punish me by withdrawing thy graces, and by giving me up to the dreadful state of spiritual insensibility. O Mary, sacred Mother of my Redeemer! who never rejectest a poor sinner, who cries to thee for assistance, avert from me, by thy powerful intercession, so great an evil. Obtain for

me the grace, rather to die than to offend my God any more. Amen.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—"Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION VII.

On the Eternal Torments of Hell.

EJACULATION: "O Lord, let not thy sentence of condemnation fall upon me: Deal not with me in thy justice, but according to thy tender mercy."

St. Ignatius, in his Meditation on Hell, placing before our imagination the length, breadth, and depth, together with the various tortures, of that Dungeon of woe, directs us to beg of God a vivid apprehension of the torments of the reprobate; that so, if the love of God do not induce us to hate and avoid sin, at least the fear of punishments may.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

You have reflected on the enormous evil of mortal sin, considered in its own nature; —you have reflected also on the severity wherewith God has dealt with former sin-

ners, who, rebelling against him, dared to commit this enormous evil;—proceed now a step further—look forward into the future, and consider the terrible judgments which God will exercise eternally in hell, upon every sinner that dies impenitent.

POINT I. Listen to the voice of God, announcing to sinners the intensity of grief that awaits them: "You shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for grief of spirit; and you shall leave your name for an execration."65 And consider, that hell is a Dungeon of endless inconceivable woe, prepared by the Justice of an offended God, for the punishment of impenitent sinners. It is essentially, therefore, a place of excruciating torments, to be dreaded by us, and most carefully to be avoided.—Oh! what a horror would you have of that infernal abyss, and how anxiously would you labour to escape it, if you could now hear the horrifying shrieks of the reprobate, and their lamentable cries of anguish and despair,—if you could see them writhing in their agonies of pain, and completely maddened (as they are) in the wildness of their rage against that invisible avenging hand which presses so heavily upon them !---- If you could now

⁶⁵ Is. lxv. 14, 15.

feel, as they feel, those bitter remorses—those heart-rending sorrows, wherewith their souls are perpetually and so keenly tortured at the sad recollection of their past crimes, oh! how sincerely would you detest your own sins, and grieve for having ever committed them! how tears of repentance would flow in torrents from your eyes, in expiation of them; that you might thereby extinguish now, in your regard, those devouring flames, which eternal weeping will not be able to extinguish hereafter! for your tears then will come too late; and, so far from relieving your sufferings, they will only add to them, by making you feel more keenly the violence of the flames that torment you.

Point II. Listen to the poor sufferers sending forth their cries of distress: "From above the Lord hath sent fire into my bones, and hath chastised me....Therefore do I weep, and my eyes run down with water; because the Comforter—the relief of my soul, is far from me;....for I am full of bitterness." And consider the bitterness of anguish which afflicts their inmost soul, when, in the excess of their pains, they howl out their piteous cries for relief, knowing, at

⁶⁶ Lam. i. 13, 16, 20.

the same time, that relief is utterly impossible! Hear how the rich man in hell calls out for some mitigation of his pain: "He cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." That drop of water, as he well knew, can never be obtained; and if it could, what relief would it afford against that ocean of devouring flame? —The fire of hell is not like the fire of this world, made for our use and comfort; but it is a fire created purposely for vengeance, by an Omnipotent God, by an offended God, who exerts his almighty power in giving violence to its flames! Oh! how inconceivably severe, then, must be the tortures which those flames inflict!!

But, besides this excruciating pain of burning alive, the poor sufferers are afflicted, moreover, with every other kind of torment, in an extreme degree. Imagine yourself, not only burning in the midst of scorching flames, but racked with pains of every kind—imagine that your head, your ears, your stomach, and all your teeth, and every bone in your body, are now aching, all at once, most violently—to such an extreme degree

67 Luke xvi. 24.

as to render you completely frantic and wild with pain; also that your mouth and nos-trils are suffocated with the stench of burning brimstone; -that your whole body, from head to foot, is covered with most painful boils and other sores, so that there is not the least part of you but what is most painfully tortured; -that you are surrounded, moreover, with merciless executioners, who, by their cruelties, add to your torments, mocking and insulting you in your miseries ---imagine yourself in this deplorable condition, without the least prospect of any relief; and then you may, perhaps, form some idea of the punishments prepared for sin; and yet, all this is nothing, in comparison of those excruciating tortures which the poor sufferers in hell are forced to endure. Oh! will you not, then, detest and avoid the great evil of sin, for the punishment of which such extreme miseries are prepared?

Point III. Listen again to their doleful cry—the cry of despair: "He hath built against me round about, that I may not get out; he hath made my fetters heavy: Yea, and when I cry, and entreat, he hath shut out my prayer." And consider what a lamentable thing it is to live in this state of

⁶⁸ Lam. iii. 7, 8.

suffering, and to live in it for ever! For, in hell, the unhappy sufferer not only endures all kinds of torments, and endures them in the highest degree of severity; but he endures them also, without the least cessation or abatement, for a never-ending eternity. And every moment he suffers, in each pain, the whole of this eternity; because each separate pain is accompanied with the dismal idea, that it is to be unceasing and for ever !——In that cup of bit-terness which the divine indignation has prepared for sinners in hell, this thought of eternity is the bitterest ingredient of all: it is this that makes them weep and gnash their teeth. When a man both weeps and gnashes his teeth at the same time, it is because he can see no resource—no possibility of relief in the distress that afflicts him: and therefore, when his torments are eternal, it is then that he not only weeps, but gnashes his teeth also, in rage and despair. -Oh! the terrible, the fatal consequences of mortal sin! Oh! what an evil and bitter thing it is for a sinner, to have left the - Lord his God!!!

Learn now the fruit which you should draw from this Meditation: You should derive from it a fear of God, which is the first step to repentance and pardon, and a powerful means of restraining you from future

sins: "The fear of the Lord is the begin-

ning of wisdom."69

You should, however, reflect on these severe punishments prepared for sin, and see what reason you have to fear them; not so much for the sake of exciting your fears, as for the sake of enabling yourself, by the consideration of God's Justice, to find your way to his mercy: it should be for the sake of exciting yourself to sincere repentance,—to the amendment of your life,—and to the practice of virtue; that so, escaping the terrible fate of the wicked in hell, you may live for ever happy with God and his Saints in heaven.

Seeing, then, those punishments which your sins have deserved:—lament your sins before God,—resolve to expiate them,—and to renounce and avoid them in future; and, in order that you may be enabled to accomplish this, resolve to practise from this moment, constantly and diligently, the three efficacious means taught you by an Archangel from heaven, viz., Prayer,—Mortification,—and universal Charity: "Prayer is good with Fasting and Alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

Colloquy.—O God of infinite goodness,

⁶⁹ Ps. cx. 10.

who, "according to the height of heaven above the earth, hast strengthened thy mercy towards them that fear thee," strengthen it now towards me, by forgiving the many and grievous sins whereby I have offended thee, and deserved thy severe chastisements. O my God, long since have I deserved to be cast into that abyss of torments which thou hast prepared for the punishment of unhappy sinners; but thy goodness and mercy have hitherto preserved me from it; and thou still offerest me the opportunity and means of escaping it. Oh! give me the grace to profit by this opportunity, and to make a good and diligent use of those means of repentance and amendment which thy infinite goodness affords me. I know that a happy or miserable eternity awaits me; and that I have it in my power, with the help of thy grace, to gain the one by escaping the other. I will now, therefore, begin to labour for heaven in good earnest: my resolution is taken—my determination is fixed. I will have nothing more to do with the passing vanities of this transitory life. Thou hast made me, O Lord, for thyself, and my heart shall not rest, till it repose in thee. In all that I do, I will henceforth seek thee, as my last end. Oh! give me grace to accomplish this my resolution; for, without thee, I can do nothing.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION III.

On the Sources of our daily Faults.

It is related that the blessed Virgin once appeared to St. Bridget, and said to her, that man ought not to live upon earth for any other reason, except to honour God and diminish sin. One object, then, for which we live, is, to diminish and finally destroy our daily faults. But, since they are so many, it would be very difficult and practically useless, to engage with them all at once: we should select the principal ones—those from which the others proceed—those which are the sources of all the rest; so that these sources being destroyed, the rivulets which flow from them may be dried up.

1. An habitual defect with regard to INTENTION may be said to be the first source of your evils. Does not truth force you to acknowledge, that your intention is either none at all,—or without devotion,—or not pure, but adulterated with some view to self-love,—or vitiated by the admixture of some bad intention? From this source proceed so many evils, that those works which

are even good in themselves, are hereby rendered not good, not pleasing to God, not meritorious, but even vicious. Consequently, what an immense store of merits and graces is lost; and not merely lost, but converted into a store of demerits!

2. Inattention to the PRESENCE OF GOD is also a source of many sins. The divine Word, speaking of the sinner, tells us that this is the cause of his wickedness: "God is not before his eyes; his ways are filthy at all times." 70 St. Basil, in his rules, says: "Who is slothful in spiritual works? Who neglects to refer his actions to God; and seeks the praises of men? Who is distracted in his prayers? It is he who does not constantly bear in mind, that God is present and beholds all his thoughts and actions." Remove, then, this evil-this forgetfulness of the divine presence, which is productive of so many faults. "Walk before God, and be perfect."71 Imitate those mystical animals, described by the prophet Ezechiel,72 which were full of eyes in every part; that is to say, they had eyes in their hands, ears, lips, feet, and heart. So you likewise should act at all times, as if you had eyes in every one of your senses; so as never to behold, nor hear, nor speak, nor

⁷⁰ Ps. ix or x. 5. 71 Gen. xvii. 1. 72 Ezech. i. 18.

think, nor do anything whatsoever, except what is worthy of God's presence, and in accordance with your duty towards him.

- 3. Delusively evading, or delaying to accept, God's preventing and exciting graces is another source of much evil. God offers us those graces for the purpose of inducing and enabling us to destroy our vices. According to the Council of Trent,73 God is continually communicating his exciting and supporting graces to his servants, as a vine is always supplying its branches with sap. Those graces of God are as necessary for enabling us to bring forth the fruit of good and meritorious works, as a constant supply of sap is for causing the branch to produce grapes. If, on account of some obstruction, the branch receives not the sap, it begins immediately to wither, it soon dies, and becomes fit for nothing but to be cut off and cast into the fire. So it will be with you, if you evade or reject the graces of God. If, then, you would avoid this evil, and many others which flow from the same source, give yourself up to a ready and diligent correspondence with all the graces which are offered you.
- 4. A neglect of order, or living without submission to rule, is a source of endless

⁷³ Sess. vi, c. 16.

faults. The evil consequence of this neglect is, that, when Prayer, Meditation, Spiritual Reading, Examination of Conscience, Preparation for the Sacraments, and other spiritual duties, come to be discharged, they are frequently hurried over either for want of having provided sufficient time, or for the sake of getting away to some other occupation; and they will be even sometimes omitted, except, perhaps, those which are of strict obligation.

5. An unbridled tongue is a source of many and great evils; so much so, that St. James says: "If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, that man's religion is vain." "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." And the Wise Man assures us, that "in the multitude of words, there shall not want sin." For, as a city, without walls of defence, is overcome by the enemy; so is a man that speaks much, overcome by the devil. Holy Job also says: "Shall a man full of talk be justified?" And St. Gregory, explaining these words of Job, says: "On him who is full of talk, shall fall this fearful curse which was pronounced upon Ruben:

James i. 26.
 Prov. x. 19.
 James iii. 2.
 Prov. xxv. 28.

'Thou art poured out as water; grow thou not.' "79

- 6. Human respects,—human reasonings,—human hopes and fears;—and also very particular friendships. By those human respects, God is disregarded, and in some degree despised;—by those human reasonings, right reason is deluded and perverted;—those human hopes and fears diminish your hope and confidence in God, and subtract from your fear of him;—those close and particular friendships are, for the most part, displeasing to God, generally causing much loss of time, and frequently occasioning condescensions which religion does not sanction.
- 7. Selfishness, or seeking one's self and one's conveniences, is a source of evil from which almost all defects proceed. It was by seeking themselves, that Lucifer and his Angels perished eternally,—that the whole human race fell, and deserved to be banished out of paradise,—and that so many souls have lost their God, and are condemned to hell. If you wish to be a disciple of Christ, deny yourself 80—renounce all self-love.81
- 8. Not avoiding the OCCASIONS of your faults is a fruitful source of them. If you

⁷⁹ Gen. xlix. 4. 80 Matt. xvi. 24. 81 Luke xiv. 26, 33.

would not do evil, keep out of the way of that which would lead you to it—avoid, as far as you can, those persons, places, circumstances, indulgences, &c., which past experience has shown you to be the cause of your defects. Remember, to frequent the occasion, is to will the evil.

9. Not keeping a guard over the senses betrays the soul into many sins. For, by these windows, not only slight injuries, but even death will enter, unless they be constantly guarded. Think not that you would be secure from the devil, even if a door had shut you up in solitude, unless you close also most carefully the doors of your senses.

These are some of the sources from which innumerable evils proceed. You see what reason you have to fear them, and to labour most earnestly in destroying them.

MEDITATION VIII.

On the Evils of Venial Sin.

EJACULATION: "Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels."

St. Ignatius says: That no consideration whatsoever, not even the avoiding of death, should ever induce us to commit wilfully any sin, however venial it may be.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Pay attention to the Almighty calling you to sanctity: "You shall be holy unto me, because I the Lord your God am holy, and I have separated you from other peo-ple, that you should be mine." And conple, that you should be mine. And consider that, as the sanctity of God cannot admit within itself the least departure from rectitude, so it is impossible that he can tolerate in us, by way of approval, any guilt of sin, however venial it may be. All sin is displeasing and hateful in his sight—"His eyes are too pure to behold evil;"83 so much so, that, if (what however cannot be)—if in the sacred Humanity of Christ, or in the Blessed Virgin, or in any one of the Saints now reigning with God in glory, any sin were found existing; it is so impossible that God should tolerate it, that the hypostatic union would be instantly dissolved, the Blessed Virgin or Saint, in whom venial sin should be found, would be deprived instantly of the beatific vision, and cast out of heaven.---Venial sin is so hateful to God, that the commission of it cannot be allowed, even if it would save the whole world: it is essentially an evil displeasing

⁸² Levit. xx. 26.

⁸³ Habac. i. 13.

to God; how careful, therefore, you should be to avoid it?

Point II. Hear how the Almighty com-plains of you, on account of this evil: "If I be your Father, where is my honour, saith the Lord of Hosts." And consider how God is your Father; you are his child. Now, what would you think of any Son, who should express such a disposition as this: "I love and honour my Father; but, with the exception of inflicting upon him mortal wounds and death, I care but little what other offences or injuries I commit against him?" Could that Son be said to love and honour his Father? Would not the heart of the Father be severely wounded by the manifestation of such a disposition in his undutiful Son? Would the worthless youth deserve even the name of son; and not rather that of vile enemy? Now, such are you—such disposition you express to God, when you deliberately offend him by venial sin, or when you are prepared so to offend him. You know, from an Apostle, that mortal sin crucifies again your blessed Redeemer; 25 and from this you may infer, that, by deliberate venial sin, he is, in a manuer,

⁸⁴ Mal. i. 6. 85 Heb. vi. 6.

spit upon, ill-treated, and despised. Will you, then, commit it?

POINT III. Attend to the caution given you by the Wise Man: "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." And consider well the importance of the admonition which these words convey. As, when the roof of a house lets in the rain, and the timber is kept almost continually wet by repeated drops, the house does not indeed immediately fall, but is in such a sure way to destruction, as to enable us to say of it, that, unless it be repaired, it will fall sooner or later;—and, as diseases of the body, which, by a neglect of remedies, are allowed to go on, do not at once produce immediate death, but put the sick periods. duce immediate death, but put the sick person in the way to death: so venial sins, in like manner, do not, indeed, give immediate death to your soul, by destroying grace; but they certainly dispose you to spiritual death; i.e., to the commission of mortal sin: partly because they lessen the fervour of charity, and so render you less able to resist temptations; and partly because they prevent many actual graces,—render you unworthy of such as are special and efficacious, for resisting

⁸⁶ Eccli. xix. 1.

temptations,—and so cause you before long to fall, by your own will, into mortal sin. Will you not, then, avoid venial sins with the greatest care, seeing the frightful dangers, and ruinous consequences, that proceed from them?

Point IV. Learn from the Psalmist to dread the ruinous consequences of venial sins. Having asked himself: "Why should I fear in the evil day?" he answers: "The iniquities of my heel shall encompass me." And consider how much reason you have to And consider how much reason you have to fear being encompassed, and brought to spiritual ruin, by the like cause. By these iniquities of the heel are to be understood venial sins; which are commonly looked upon by men, as being of no more consequence than a little dust on their feet; but the Royal Prophet, far from looking upon them as of little consequence, was afraid of being encompassed by them, and so brought to spiritual ruin. Every servant of God should entertain a similar fear; because the progress from venial to mortal sins is both progress from venial to *mortal* sins is both short and easy. It was for this reason, (viz., venial sin being the direct way to mortal transgressions,) that a place was prepared for St. Teresa in hell, into which she would

⁸⁷ Ps. xlviii. 6.

have fallen, if she had not avoided certain venial sins; as she herself tells us in her "Life, c. 32."

Now, in order to obtain this holy fear of venial sins, and to guard yourself with horror against them, adopt the following practices:—

- 1. Make frequent "Acts of the Love of God above all things." For these Acts, when properly made, not only have the effect of blotting out all your sins, mortal as well as venial; but they contain, virtually, a detestation and horror of every venial sin: for, by the very fact that you love God above all things, you love him above that good, (or rather apparent good,) which is sought in venial sin.—How many occasions have you, during each day, for making these "Acts of the love of God above all things?"
- 2. Be frequent in your acts of piety, mortification, and charity.
- 3. In all your preparations for Sacramental Confession,—in your daily Examinations of Conscience,—and in your regular Meditations, endeavour to strengthen your soul against venial sins, by this or the like protestation, which may serve as the Colloquy for this Meditation.

Colloquy.—For the love of the Most Blessed Trinity, for the love of Jesus and

Mary, and of all the Saints, I intend and most firmly resolve to be always striving after perfection. Thou knowest, O Lord, the desire, which thy goodness has given me, of serving thee with the purest affection of my heart. O my God, sole object of my love! receive me as thy servant, and forgive my many past negligences in thy service. I intend and resolve, with the assistance of divine grace, to preserve unstained the angelic virtue of purity;-to have no attachment to any thing, except to thee, my God; -and to love nothing but thee, or for thy sake. Whatever I shall do, or say, or think, or desire; it shall be for the love of the Most Blessed Trinity, of my Saviour Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin my Mother, of St. Joseph, and of the whole Court of heaven. I intend and firmly resolve to observe inviolably my rule of life; and never to commit deliberately any even the least sin, or imperfection. With the assistance of divine grace, I will endeavour to be constantly in the act and exercise of charity, conformity, resignation, and desire of pleasing thee, my God; and I will strive to walk always in thy holy presence. O my God, enable me to fulfil this resolution.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

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MEDITATION IX.

On the Ruinous Evil of TEPIDITY.

EJACULATION: "And I said: Now have I begun: let this be the change of the right hand of the Most High."

St. Ignatius says, That, when we fall into a state of spiritual desolation, one cause of it is this: that, on account of our tepidity and negligence in spiritual exercises, we are deservedly deprived of divine consolation.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Let the voice of God, delivering his denunciation against negligence in his service, sound constantly in your ears: "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully," or negligently. Based And consider how God pronounces a special malediction on Tepidity in his service, over and above what he pronounces on other vices.

88 Jer. xlviii. 10.

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And with reason: because it turns good works into evil, and thereby offers a great injury to the divine goodness which is annexed to those good works. Other sins consist in this, that a man does evil; but, by Tepidity, a man commits sin in doing good actions. The tepidity of the action destroys its goodness; not in the same manner as vain glory and other sinister motives, which only vitiate the action extrinsically; but tepidity affects the act intrinsically, and renders it sinful from beginning to end: so that he who is really tepid, always sins: In performing good works, he sins; in praying, he sins; in saying or hearing Mass, he sins; in receiving sacraments, he sins, &c.;—he sins, by not performing these works in such a manner, as to make them really good works. How great, then, how rainous, is the evil of Tepidity!——It is not, indeed, a mortal sin; but it is an unceasing sin, and is sure to end in what is mortally and grievously sinful, unless it be corrected.

Tepidity destroys fervour,—puts a stop to merits,—gains from good works nothing but evil,—weakens grace,—strengthens temptation,—offends God,—pleases the devil,—and hurries on the soul rapidly in its way towards hell. Will you not, then, detest this ruinous vice; and resolve at once to shake it off, by rousing yourself to fervour?

Point II. Let the divine threat, announcing to the tepid their approaching ruin, resound likewise in your ears: "By slothfulness, a building shall be brought down." And consider still further, and more in detail, the ruinous evils which Tepidity, or spiritual sloth, brings to the soul, and to that spiritual edifice of virtue which God had built up within her:—

- 1. The tepid Christian is more frequently tempted, and attacked by his enemies; as a city without walls or fortification is more exposed to attacks;—
- 2. He is oftener and more easily overcome; because he renders the graces of God, and the helps of religion, ineffectual in his regard;—
- 3. He is more backward and languid in his endeavours to rise from his fall; like one who has received a paralytic stroke;—
- 4. He is cured of each fall with greater difficulty, and also with greater danger; because, remaining in his tepidity, he will fall again worse than before: "The latter state of that man will become worse than the former." 90
- 5. He will yield again with less resistance, because he becomes habituated to

⁸⁹ Eccles, x. 18.

⁹⁰ Luke xi. 26.

the evil; as a man easily takes a disorder, when his constitution is predisposed to that particular complaint;—

- 6. He feels that his heart is more rarely, and less powerfully, solicited by Almighty God, who begins to reject him: "I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." 91
- 7. He keeps sinking every day lower and lower, till, deprived at length of spiritual life, he falls, like a piece of inert lead, into the depth of sin.
- 8. He dies in dreadful fears of the divine judgment, suffering more violent temptations of the enemy, who does all he can to plunge him into despair, as if he were quite cast off by Almighty God;—
- 9. He is with greater difficulty saved; because, as he has been so tepid and slothful, and so negligent in God's service—in all his duties; he has therefore a very heavy debt of temporal punishment to discharge;—
- 10. But if he be not saved, he is then plunged deeper into hell; because he has lost his soul amidst the greatest opportunities of saving it.

Pondering well these fearful evils resulting from Tepidity, lament the share which

⁹¹ Apoc. iii. 16.

you have had therein: Resolve to be tepid no longer, but begin from this moment to serve God with fervour.

Point III. Learn from your Redeemer, by what means you are to detect this evil: "By their fruits you shall know them." And consider how the fruits of Tepidity are sure signs of its existence in the soul. The fruits, and therefore the sure signs, of Tepidity are these:—

- 1. To pray and meditate dilatorily—without relish,—without fruit;—
- 2. To find a difficulty of recollecting yourself—of returning into your own heart;—
- 3. To make your examinations of conscience superficially—without lamenting your faults, or resolving to correct them;—
- 4. To pour yourself out upon external things; not from duty, but from a loathing of spirituality;—
- 5. To be eager in seeking consolations in created things.
- 6. To be too free in carping at the words and actions of others.
- 7. To grow weary of religious discipline, as burthensome.

92 Matt. vii. 16.

8. To fancy you do more than you are obliged, or more than you need; from a desire to do less.

Ponder well these unhappy fruits of Tepidity,—see how far they apply to you,—lament them,—resolve to labour earnestly in correcting them. And, for this purpose, adopt resolutely the means, which, if practised with perseverance, will be effectual: Prayer, in all its branches,—Mortification, both interior and exterior,—and universal Charity:—"Prayer is good with Fasting and Alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

Colloquy.—O God of goodness! how many graces during life, how many means of salvation thou hast afforded me! but, by my tepidity, I have rendered those graces void, and have not profited by those means of virtue—my life has been nothing but negligence and sin! It shall not be so any longer—I have said: Now I begin; let this be the change of the right hand of the Most High. Recounting all my days in the bitterness of my soul, I will offer to thee, henceforth, the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart, which I know thou wilt not despise. O my God, whose tender mercies are above all thy works, pardon my past negligences in thy service; and give me the

grace to serve thee, henceforth, with a perfect heart—to be diligent and fervent in labouring for thy greater honour and glory, and for the advancement of my own and neighbour's salvation.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—"Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION X.

On Purgatory.

EJACULATION: "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities; Lord, who shall stand it?"

St. Ignatius, after his Meditation on Hell, directs that Meditations be made on other punishments of sin; which direction includes Purgatory.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Hear the piteous cry of the souls that are suffering in Purgatory: "Have pity on me, have pity on me; at least you my friends; because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.93 And consider the excru-

93 Job xix. 21.

ciating tortures which await you in that furnace of fire, unless you now extinguish its flames in your regard, by a life of penance and virtue:—

- 1. Of those severe torments we may say, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive," what excruciating sufferings God hath prepared in Purgatory, for those who depart out of this life, before they have discharged the debt of punishment due to their sins. With the exception of eternity and despair, they are of the same nature and intensity as the sufferings inflicted in hell: There is, for a time, the pain of loss, i.e., the privation of the beatific vision, which afflicts the soul with inconceivable grief;—There are also the pains of sense, infinitely surpassing, in severity, all the torments of this world put together.
- 2. In the case of those who have to suffer the temporal punishment of many mortal sins, their torments are even *more severe* than those which some souls in hell have to endure—such souls, for instance, as are there for only one or two mortal sins. For God "renders to every one according to his works."
- 3. In order to form a more vivid idea of the torments of Purgatory, represent to

yourself an immense furnace of fire, heated to the highest possible degree: imagine, for example, the land of the whole County, in which you now are, to be dug out to the depth of a hundred miles; and then to be filled up with coal, mixed with brimstone; -suppose the whole of this to be enkindled, and to have been burning till it has become all fire; -and then consider how inconceivably intense must be the heat in the centre of this immense body of fire: so extremely intense would be the heat, that, if a solid hall of steel, as big as a mountain, were to be cast into it, it would be melted instantaneously, so as to become as liquid as water. Suppose now, that, having been rendered incapable of dying, you are cast into the centre of this furnace of raging fire, and are forced to remain there, writhing and agonizing in torments, for a whole twelvemonth: oh! what a terrible chastisement! how pitiful would be your condition! And vet you would be only suffering the natural heat of natural fire—of fire created by the yoodness of God, for our use and benefit!

But in Purgatory (if you should ever go thither), you will have to suffer the supernatural heat of supernatural fire!—a fire enkindled by an Omnipotent God,—enkindled in his anger,—enkindled purposely for vengeance,—and therefore heated to the utmost

of intensity!

In Purgatory (unless you take care to escape it), you will have to endure a fire which is enkindled, with all this intensity, for the purpose of burning souls that are not yet pure enough to see God—for the purpose of burning out their stains in that furnace of searching flames: And this fire, unless you escape it by penance, is to burn your soul, not for a day, or a week, or a year, but perhaps for a hundred or a thousand years, or more! St. Peter tells us,94 that those souls that had been cast into this prison for having been incredulous at the time of the deluge, continued to be still there, when Christ died; which was a period of more than 2,300 years. Oh! what a terrible chastisement it is, to be cast into this fiery prison, for such a period! And yet how few persons live in such a manner, as to have any reasonable hope of escaping it!! Will not you at least dread it? Will you not labour to escape it? Will you not do penance now in good earnest, before the hand of the Lord touch you?

Point II. Hear the Almighty declaring how rigorously he will search out all the faults which are to be the fuel of those torturing flames: "When I shall take a time, I will adge justices." And consider how even

⁹⁵ Ps. lxxiv. 3.

those works, which appear to you to be good and meritorious, will, in many instances, be found by God to be iniquitous and punish-able. Unless you do sufficient penance, you will be punished even for the *least fault*, and for every fault: even for every idle word which you shall have uttered,—for every slight impatience,—for every criminal neglect of a minute of time, -for every momentary indulgence in sloth, vanity, &c.: will there, then, be one single hour of your whole life wherein you will not have done many things for which you will have to suffer? Oh! what an immense debt of punishment you may have to discharge! Take care you do not still further increase it; but labour, by penitential works, to diminish it. Oh! with what reason does the Council of Trent declare, that "the whole life of a Christian is a continual penance?" Remember, that, in the next life, God never spares the sinner—his mercy then gives place to strict justice.

Point III. Attend to the advice of your Redeemer: "Be at agreement with thine adversary in time, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out

from thence till thourepay the last farthing." And consider the means of avoiding that fearful prison.

- 1. You will escape it, if, from your heart, you forgive all persons whatever they have done against you, and never seek the least revenge: "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven." 97
- 2. You will escape it, if you bear patiently, and perform fervently, whatever you find grievous or troublesome to you, in the service of God; for the constant and fervent practice of a virtuous and religious life is a sacrifice, very pleasing to God—it is a slow martyrdom, which blots out the remains of sin.
- 3. You will escape it, if you are particularly devoted to the passion of Christ, meditating upon it frequently and devoutly; for he who condoles here with Christ, shall rejoice with him hereafter. This devotedness to his passion obtains a full application of his atoning merits.
- 4. You will escape it, if you are charitable and devout in praying for the souls in Purgatory, and in performing works of piety in their behalf; "For with the same measure

⁹⁶ Matt. v. 25, 26. ⁹⁷ Luke vi. 37.

that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."98

- 5. You will escape it, if you make a good and frequent use of the Sacraments of Penance, and the Holy Eucharist.
- 6. If you make frequent and fervent acts of the love of God, and contrition.
- 7. If you are fervent and diligent in gaining the indulgences offered you by the Church.

Resolve to employ, with God's assistance, all these means. They are included, every one of them, in those three eminent good works recommended by the Archangel Raphael. For *Prayer* includes all of them, except the first; and that is an act of *Mortification* and *Charity*. You see, then, how "Prayer is good with Fasting and Alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

Colloquy.—My heart, O Lord, trembles within me, when I consider the rigours of thy justice—the severity of those chastisements which thou hast prepared for the punishment of sinners in the next life! for I cannot but acknowledge, that I deserve to feel the whole weight of thy vengeance. O God of mercies, enable me to begin now to

⁹⁶ Luke vi. 38.

bring forth such worthy fruits of penance, as will cause me to "be at agreement with thee," whilst I am in this life. Let thy justice be satisfied in me now, during time; and not be deferred till I enter into eternity: here burn, here cut, here spare me not; provided thou spare me hereafter. O precious blood of Jesus! extinguish in my regard those avenging flames, which my sins have deserved! O Mary, my mother! do thou intercede in my favour—obtain for me the mercy which I crave.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION IV.

On the Causes of Spiritual Ruin which all Persons have to guard against.

Such is the instability of this world, and the lamentable inconstancy of our mortal life, that even those who serve God, and devote themselves to his service, are sometimes found to fall off: In his Angels God found iniquity,—the Nazarites, that "are whiter than snow," become "blacker than coals.... They that were fed delicately, have died,.... they that were brought up in scarlet, he

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embraced the dung." ⁹⁹ And they who stood, and appeared to stand firm, have fallen most miserably. That so great a misfortune may never happen to you, consider now the causes which lead to spiritual ruin, and resolve to avoid them.

1. The first cause of this ruin is, the want of having laid a solid foundation; which is intimated by Christ, in the house built upon the sand, the fall of which was very great as soon as the storms and floods came against it."100 See, then, whether you have laid a good foundation of piety and devotedness to God; acquired a deep-rooted horror of sin, especially mortal; -withdrawn your mind and heart from earthly and carnal affections; -conceived a real desire of internal and external mortification, i.e., a hunger and thirst for the cross ;-impressed on your mind a vivid and strong sense of the eternal truths; -and implanted in your heart a high estimation of spiritual things. Without some foundation of this kind, there is every reason to fear that you will fall off from your fervour, and after that from your duty; i.e., when the storms of temptation arise. - If, therefore, considering the matter before God, you judge that you have not

⁹⁰ Lam. iv. 5, 7, 8. ¹⁰⁰ Matt. vii. 26, 27. Luke vi. 49.

laid this solid foundation—that you have not built upon a rock, but upon mere sand; you must at once set about supplying the deficiency. You know full well what God requires from you,—you know what your conscience, and religion, and the inspirations of Almighty God, require from you. Resolve accordingly, and set to in good earnest.

2. The second cause of spiritual ruin is that of which the Bishop of Laodicea was admonished by our Blessed Lord, when he said: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold, nor hot: I would thou wert cold, or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." 101 This cause has its beginning in the growing evil for which the Bishop of Ephesus was also reproved by our Lord, saying: "I know thy works, and thy labour....but I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and do penance, and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place." The second cause, therefore, is, a falling off from your first fervour, or Tepidity, which arises principally from making a bad and fruitless

¹⁰¹ Apoc. iii. 15, 16. ¹⁰² Apoc. ii. 2, 4, 5.

use of prayer and meditation;—not preparing for it, or preparing negligently;—not meditating at the proper time;—curtailing the time,—and at last omitting it; at least, occasionally. When the spiritual fire is not kept alive in the affections of the heart, then the ardour of the soul cools,—spiritual things begin to be tiresome,—all relish is lost for a religious life,—tepidity arrives at its last degree,—and spiritual ruin is the consequence. Examine whether this cause exist in you; consider its fearful consequences; do penance; and return to your first fervour.

3. The third cause of spiritual ruin is akin to the preceding, and naturally flows from it; and is expressed in these words of Jacob to his son Ruben: "Thou art poured out as water; grow thou not." 103 This being poured out as water, represents the giving one's self up to external things; such as frequent visits, long conversations, and other unnecessary distractions; not from duty or real utility, but for the purpose of preventing time from being tedious. This soon brings spiritual ruin. Examine whether you have not some reason to fear on this head. Resolve to attend to yourself and your own duties; without going any further,

¹⁰³ Gen. xlix. 4.

you will find enough to do. God requires all this from you, and he requires nothing more. If duty (i.e., obedience or your own state of life) forces you to external things, you must then (not give, but only) lend yourself to them; and this, not totally, but in part only: dwell with yourself interiorly, and love retirement, after the example of Christ.

4. The fourth cause of spiritual ruin is similar to that which ruined Lucifer, and the unhappy spirits that fell with him, viz., a desire of self-excellence, or a want of humility. From this cause arise self-esteem; mility. From this cause arise self-esteem;—dreading and flying from contempt;—boasting of one's learning, talents, or other qualifications;—desiring and procuring preferment before others;—indignation when others are preferred, or employed in more honourable offices; indignation also at not being praised, or esteemed, or valued for one's labour, &c. This indignation, or disappointed pride, produces a bitterness and uneasiness of soul,—a disrelish for a religious life, and at length its total abandonment. Of this we have a striking example, in the person of a religious who, preaching before a Polish Duke, received from him this encomium: "He would be an excellent Bishop, if his being a Jesuit did excellent Bishop, if his being a Jesuit did

not prevent him." He was flattered by this praise; fixed his heart on being a Bishop; and for this purpose he left the society, under pretext of supporting his parents. He went soon after to the Duke, who had previously admired and praised him. The Duke, however, would not see him; but sent him this answer: "I know a person of this name, a Jesuit; I admire him, and I love him: but I know, and admire, and love him, only as a Jesuit." Thus was he disappointed in his ambition; he became wretchedly miserable; and prevailed on a Bishop to negotiate for his readmission into the society; but the negotiation being somewhat delayed, he fell into despair; put an end to his own life; and thus left behind him a very fearful example of the danger of admitting into our soul this cause of spiritual ruin.

5. The fifth cause of spiritual ruin is expressed by Almighty God in these words: "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not." ¹⁰⁴ Frequenting bad company—having society with wicked, or irreligious persons, or with such as neglect their spiritual duties, and are full of the spirit of the world, will produce this ruinous effect. "With the holy, thou wilt be holy; and with the perverse, thou wilt be perverted." ¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Osee vii. 9. dos Ps. xvii. 26, 27.

6. The sixth cause of spiritual ruin is the persuasion, that you can be equally saved without performing such and such acts of piety and religion (for example, frequent Communion, &c.), which, although strongly recommended by the Church, are not of strict obligation, so that they can be omitted without sin. This is a deceptiona delusion of the devil. You can be saved, without employing such and such means; but will you, if, by not employing them, you break from the chain of graces those links to which God has attached the grace of final perseverance? Be fervent and dili-gent in your spiritual duties, and in employing the means of perseverance with which Religion furnishes you, and then you will be saved

MEDITATION XI.

On Death; —Death of the Wicked; —Death of the Just.

EJACULATION: "Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them."

St. Ignatius directs us to make this reflection: "If I were now at the point of death, how should I wish to have acted in the present case? This, then, is the manner in which I ought to act."

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Listen to the prophet Isaias, warning you in the words which he addressed to king Ezechias: "Thus saith the Lord: Take order with thy house; for thou shall die, and not live." And consider how you are hastening towards death; and how, even now, you may perhaps be very near it.

- I. You will die: this is certain: the decree of your death is already passed in heaven, and it is passed irrevocably; but when, —in what place,—in what state,—in what disposition of soul, will you die? Of all this you are left in total ignorance, in order that you may prepare for your last hour; and may keep yourself always prepared, as if you were each moment at the point of death.
- 2. You will die but once—when once you have departed out of this world, you will not be allowed to return to live in it again. Take effectual means, therefore, to secure yourself against dying a miserable death, since this is an evil which you can never afterwards repair.

166 Is. xxxviii, 1.

- 3. You will die to enter into eternity: then, closing the eyes of your body, you will open those of your soul—you will then see things, and judge of them, very differently from what you do now. Learn, therefore, to look upon things at all times, in the same light as you will do when you die.
- 4. You will die stripped of all things, except your merits and demerits: these alone will remain with you, to accompany you to the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ: there your friends cannot assist you, nor your enemies injure you. All will depend on your works. Labour, therefore, by good works, to lay up a rich store of merits which may enable you to meet your Judge with confidence. Oh! how clearly will you, one day, see the vanity of all that passes away with this short life, or that ends in everlasting misery!

Point II. Listen to the Almighty declaring, that "The death of the wicked is very evil." And consider how dreadful is the condition of a man dying in mortal sin!

1. The pains of his sickness doubly afflict him: for they afflict him in his body, because he is forced to suffer them; and also

¹⁰⁷ Ps. xxxiii. 22.

in his soul, because he suffers them impatiently.

2. On every side he sees cause for alarm: if he raise his eyes towards heaven, he beholds a God provoked against him;—if he look at the objects about him, he trembles at the thought of those merciless devils, who are soon to be his cruel tormentors; and are already surrounding him, engaged in securing him as their victim;—beneath, he fancies he sees hell already opening its mouth to devour him;—before him, he seems to behold Jesus Christ, whom he has so often crucified again by his sins, coming to pronounce his condemnation;—within, he hears a guilty conscience raising its voice against him, and already dictating the awful sentence. Frightened into despair by these causes of alarm, he at length breathes out his guilty soul into the hands of the devils, whom he has served during life.

In order that you may avoid such a death as this, God now offers you his grace. "Receive not this grace in vain;" but resolve, from this moment, to correspond with it to the best of your power. Bear constantly in mind the sentence of your Redeemer: "Every tree that doth not bring forth good fruits, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."

POINT III. Listen to the Royal Prophet, describing to you the happy end of the just: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." And consider that their death is indeed precious,—

- 1. Because they sweeten all the pains which they have to suffer, by considering the will of God, and the death of their beloved Redeemer;—
- 2. Because they meet death with feelings of security and joy—they welcome it as the gate of life, through which they desire to pass, that they may arrive at God.
- 3. Because they do not find it a painful, but a desirable separation, when they leave this world and all things in it; since they have previously divested their hearts of all earthly affections.
- 4. Because they die in Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, Contrition, Desire of seeing God, &c.

You may die such a death as this, if you choose: lead the life of the just, and then you will die the death of the just. A certain time is given to you, that you may employ it in preparing for death: the time allowed you is sufficient for this purpose, but not too

¹⁰⁸ Ps. cxv. 15.

much. If, then, you have hitherto wasted your time in doing nothing towards this preparation, or in doing worse than nothing; you must now labour the more earnestly—you must hasten the work, during the time that remains; this is a matter of necessity. "You must work the works of him that sent "You must work the works of him that sent you, whilst it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work." Resolve, therefore, to comply with this necessary advice of the Wise Man: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly; for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." In order to fulfil this resolution, practise constantly and diligently the proper means—the three eminent good works—Prayer, Mortification, and Charity; and then, when your death approaches, you will not only know, but, to your great comfort, you will feel, that "Prayer is good with Fasting and Alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

Colloquy.—Ah! how negligently have I hitherto lived, as if there were no necessity of preparing for death! But "I have said: now I begin." Oh! bestow upon me, most merciful Lord, those efficacious graces which will prevent my present resolutions from

¹⁰⁹ John ix. 4.

¹¹⁰ Eccles, ix. 10.

being ineffectual, like all the rest which I have hitherto made; "let this be the change of the right hand of the Most High." My resolution is now taken—it is fixed and inviolable: the time that remains shall be employed very differently from that which is passed. From this very moment I will make use, and a diligent use, of the means of advancing in virtue and perfection; that death, when it comes, may find me prepared. I renounce all earthly affections that would bind me to this world, and every attachment which is not for thee; and I am prepared to suffer henceforth any loss, and to endure any pain, rather than offend thee, my God, by the least sin. Oh! confirm my resolution; strengthen and support it with thy grace; and enable me to reduce it to immediate practice. Vouchsafe me, O Lord, this one favour: preserve me from ever falling back from my present resolution into my former tepid and negligent life.—Holy Mary, Mother of God, obtain this favour for me: pray for me now, and at the hour of my death.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XII.

On the Particular Judgment.

EJACULATION: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified."

St. Ignatius directs us to judge of things now, as we shall wish to have judged of them, when we come to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Give ear to the Almighty declaring: "I will judge every man according to his ways." And consider that this Judgment will be exercised at the instant of your departure out of life; and that it will be most rigorous and exact.

- 1. For, not only your mortal sins, but your venial sins also, even every idle word, will have to be accounted for; as your Judge forewarns you;—
 - 2. Even your justices, or good actions,

¹¹¹ Ezech, xviii, 30.

will be most closely examined; i.e., the intentions, inclinations, and other circumstances, with which you have performed them;—

- 3. All your omissions of good,—your neglects of interior inspirations,—and your abuse of the means of grace, and of the divine mercy, will also be examined;—
- 4. All the sins, which you have criminally caused in others, will be added to your account; even those sins, which have not, but might have been committed, by occasions which you have knowingly given.

All this, and much more, will be the matter of this fearful Judgment. Consider what a terrible account you may have to give; and endeavour, by means of prayer, the sacraments, acts of contrition, works of penance, &c., to lessen its terrors, and to render your sentence one of mercy.

Point II. Give ear to the warning of your Judge, who says: "I will come to you in judgment, and will be a speedy witness against them that have not feared me, saith the Lord of Hosts." And consider the form of this Particular Judgment.

1. Jesus Christ will appear before you,

¹¹² Mal. iii. 5.

and will sit in judgment against you, showing you his mercies, his merits, his graces, and all his benefits in your regard; he will show you, moreover, the use which you have made of them, contrasted with that which you ought to have made.

- 2. The devil, your accuser, will stand on your left hand, and will say: "Lord, thou didst bestow upon this man such and such great blessings; yet, despising thee, he chose me—rejecting thy favours and inspirations, he followed my suggestions; therefore, deliver him up to me—he is mine."
- 3. Your good Angel will stand on your right hand, and will be obliged by truth to bear witness to every thing which you have thought, said, and done, in your whole life.
- 4. Your conscience will both dictate and ratify the sentence, which will seal your everlasting doom.

When your Judge shall demand the account of your entire life, what will you be able to answer him? Will you be able to say with St. Augustin: "I have done, O Lord, what thou hast commanded; give what thou hast promised."

Point III. Give ear to your Redeemer and Judge, admonishing you to take precautions against being condemned: "How will you escape the judgment of hell?" And consider by what means you may render this Judgment favourable to you.

- 1. If you take care never to judge nor condemn others, he who is to be your Judge declares, that you shall not be judged, nor condemned.
- 2. If you judge yourself now, the Apostle assures you, that you shall not be judged by the Lord.
- 3. If you render favourable to you the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of your Judge—the "Mother of divine mercy," she will be your powerful Advocate.

Resolve, therefore, to reduce these means to practice.

4. If, considering the severe examination which you must shortly undergo, and the strict account which will then be demanded, you are faithful and diligent in discharging all the duties of your state of life; you will then have a rich store of merits to plead in your behalf, and to save you from condemnation. But if, upon looking back into

¹¹³ Matt. xxiii. 33.

your past life, you find that you have not discharged these duties as you ought to have done; you must now redouble your efforts—you must labour the more, during the time that remains, in order to make up for that which you have lost. If the talents which you have received, i.e., the time, and graces, and opportunities, which have been allowed you during life, be found unimproved, then your Judge will say to the ministers of his justice: "Take this unprofitable servant: bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But if, on the contrary, you shall be able to return your talents with proper interest, then he will say to you: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joys of thy Lord." 115

Look back upon your past negligences and sins,—lament them, and crave pardon,—resolve to correct them from this moment,—and make your resolution practical, by adopting the means necessary for enabling you to fulfil it. These means are included in the three eminent good works, which have been so repeatedly recommended to your practice. Live in the constant and

¹¹⁴ Matt. xxii. 13. Matt. xxv. 30.

¹¹⁵ Matt. xxv. 21.

diligent practice of *Prayer*, *Mortification*, and *Churity*, and then you will have nothing to fear—you will then be happy here, and happy hereafter. For "prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

Colloguy.—O Jesus, my sovereign Judge, before whose tribunal I must shortly appear, have pity on me, and prepare me for the hour of trial: enter not into judgment with thy servant; for I know, that, in thy sight, I am not justified. Alas! "what shall I do, when thou, O Lord, shalt rise to judge? and when thou shalt examine, what shall I answer thee?" Oh! give me grace to amend my life, and to atone for the many sins which I have committed against thee; cure the wounds of my guilty soul, before they become perpetual and refuse to be healed." Grant, O Lord, that henceforth I may always make a good use of the time that is present, by labouring diligently both to expiate the evils of the past, and to lay up a rich store of merits for the future; so that, when I shall be called before thy tribunal, it may be for the purpose of receiving from thee the reward of a happy eternity.

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—" Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XIII.

On the Fear of God's Judgments.

EJACULATION: "O my God, give me grace to fear thee, with that holy fear which is the beginning of wisdom."

St. Ignatius, reminding us, in his first Exercise on Sin, that many persons have been condemned, like the Angels, for, perhaps, only one mortal sin, or for sins less grievous and less numerous than ours, shows us thereby what reason we have to fear the judyments of God.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Attend to this fearful sentence of the Wise Man: "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred." And consider how these words should break down all your presumption, by leading you to fear the secret Judgments of God.—By the Judgments of God are to be understood, not merely those two decisive acts, one of which

116 Eccles. ix. 1.



is to take place immediately after death, and the other at the last Day; but also certain hidden orders or dispositions of his providence—certain secret, inscrutable decrees regarding his creatures; which dispositions or decrees are, in the sacred Scriptures, called an abyss: 117 sometimes they are called an unsearchable knowledge: "Thy knowledge, O Lord, is become wonderful to me; it is high, and I cannot reach to it; 118 and sometimes a light hidden from us: "He inhabiteth light inaccessible." 119

The usual order or disposition of God's providence is this: That he who leads a holy life, shall die a happy death; and that he who leads a wicked life, shall die an evil death; as a man who is always travelling in the direct road to Babylon or Jerusalem, will finally arrive at that city towards which he is continually going. But it would be indeed wonderful, if he who is hastening, day and night, in the straight way to Babylon, should arrive in the end at Jerusalem; (and vice versa,): i.e., if he who has been spending all his life in sin, should die a saint in the end; or if he who has been practising virtue all his life, should die a reprobate at last. And yet, these things do sometimes happen: it was the case with the

¹¹⁷ Ps. xxxv. 7. ¹¹⁸ Ps. cxxxviii. 6. ¹¹⁹ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

penitent thief on the cross, who, after having lived a sinner, died a saint; it was the case also with that one of the forty Martyrs of Sebaste, who, after having lead a life of virtue, and suffered persecution almost to death, yielded in the end for the sake of going into the warm bath; then died immediately, and so lost his soul.

These are the inscrutable Judgments of God—they are that "deep abyss," that "unsearchable knowledge," that "inaccessible light," whereof we can gain no insight in this life. Of these hidden judgments you should always entertain a holy fear, tempered with a firm hope and unshaken confidence in God's infinite goodness and mercy.

Point II. In order to excite within your soul this holy fear, together with an un-shaken confidence in God, listen to the first Doctor of the Church, teaching you how you are to make sure of obtaining an entrance into the everlasting kingdom: "Brethren, labour the more, that, by good works, you may make sure your calling and election....For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."120 And consider that the present

. 120 2 Pet. i. 10, 11.

uncertainty of your election should spur you on to be *more* diligent, and *more* fer-vent in serving God; in order that what, speculatively, is uncertain, may, practically, become morally certain. With this view, make occasionally such reflections as these: "Who knows whether my name is written in the Book of Life, or not? Who knows whether I shall be lost or saved in the end?" St. Bernard used to address reflections of this kind to his Monks, in order to urge this kind to his Monks, in order to urge them forward to greater fervour and diligence in doing good works. Your blessed Lord acts with you in the same manner, when he tells you, that "many are called, but few are chosen,"—that "not every one that saith to him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father; he shall enter." ---In such reflections as these, there are two extremes to be carefully guarded against, viz., presumption and despair. We are to join with them this admonition of St. Augustin: "If thou art not predestined, labour that thou mayst be predestined: strive so to live, that thou mayst be fit for a place in heaven."* This admonition of St. Augustin is in perfect accordance with that of St.

^{*} Si non es prædestinatus, fac ut prædestinéris; enitere ita vivere, ut cœlesti habitatoni congruas,"

Peter: "Brethren, labour the more, that, by good works, you may make sure your calling and election." Which is just the same as saying: "If thou art not predestined, labour that thou mayst be predestined"—so long as you are not certain of your election, "labour the more by good works, to make it certain; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Point III. If you neglect good works, or become lukewarm in the performance of them, hear the threat pronounced against you by Jesus Christ: "I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof." 121 And consider, that the religious advantages which you have received, give you no real security: For, as St. Jerom says: "It is not living in the midst of religion, but living therein religiously, that will obtain the reward." Let not those persons who have received less and fewer religious advantages, surpass you in the service of God: lest that fearful threat which you have just heard, be executed upon you: "The kingdom of God shall be

¹²¹ Matt. xxi. 43.

taken from you, and shall be given to others yielding the fruits thereof." For so it was taken from Judas, and given to Matthias; so it was taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles; -Thus "Many have come from the east and the west, and have sat down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; whilst the children of the kingdom have been cast out into the exterior darkness."122 Thus, at the last day, Christ will declare to some who have even worked miracles in his name: "I know you not: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Remember, "a man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred." Fear, therefore, lest you should deserve to be cast off, that another may take your place: but let not your fear be a mere speculative fear only, but a practical one—such as will have the effect of correcting your conduct, by bringing it to the exact rule of religious discipline: for thus you will "make your calling and election sure; and an entrance will be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

With regard to the present uncertainty of your future lot, adopt the following disposition and practice: You know how good God is;

¹²² Matt. viii. 11. ¹⁸³ Luke xiii. 25, 27.

—you know how worthy he is of all possible love;—you know that if God should even condemn you, still, as he cannot cease to be God, so he cannot cease to be good: You know all this: how, then, can you refrain from making the following act of devotedness to him?—

Colloguy.—O God! O infinite Goodness, who alone art worthy of my love! supposing I were even reprobated—supposing I am not to love thee in eternity; for this very reason I will love thee all my life; and, because I love thee, I will thereinte; and, because I love thee, I will therefore serve thee. If I am not to enjoy thee after death, I will at least enjoy thee while I live: if I am to be deprived of thee in heaven, I will endeavour to possess thee here on earth, that I may not be twice miserable—both in this world, and in the next also. For, why should I make myself miserable and unhappy before the time? serable and unhappy before the time? Whatever is to become of me in the end, I commit it to thee and thy judgments. By a spirit of persevering prayer, mortification, and charity, and by the constant practice of these three means of union with thee, I will adhere to thee, so as not to lose thee while I live, in the hope of not losing thee after death.

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—" Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION V.

On Fearing the Mercies, Kindnesses, and Favours of God, conferred in this Life.

Who would ever have supposed, that not only God's judgments, but even his mercies, his kindnesses, and his favours or benefits bestowed in this life, are to be feared by us? What worthless servant fears, because his master, overlooking his unworthiness, treats him with kindness and indulgence? What criminal ever fears the escaping of punishment? Where is the ungrateful and undeserving man that fears the being enriched with favours and benefits? These things seem to be desirable, rather than subjects of fear. But, if you consider what Abraham said to Dives in hell, you will see that they afford real cause for alarm: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."124 And this is in accord-

Luke xvi. 25.

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ance with these words of Jesus Christ: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." "Woe to you that are RICH; for you have your consolation," i.e., in this world. "Woe to you that are FILLED; for you shall hunger. Woe to you that NOW LAUGH; for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when men shall bless you." 126 On the the other hand he says: "Blessed are ye poor,—blessed are ye that hunger now,—blessed are ye that weep now,—blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you (i.e., reject you from their society, as being beneath them), and when they shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake: Be glad in that day, and rejoice, for behold, your reward is great in heaven." 127

We have reason, therefore, to rejoice when God exercises severity towards us in this life, because it affords us a very strong assurance, that God is reserving our consolation or reward for the next life. "For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth." So true, and so universally true, is this, that St. Paul declares to Timothy, without exception, that "All who will live godly in Christ

¹²⁵ Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16. 127 Luke vi. 20 to 23. 126 Luke vi. 24, 25, 26. 128 Heb. xii. 6.

Jesus, shall suffer persecution;"129 and that "through many tribulations, we must enter into the kingdom of God."150 Of this truth the Scriptures furnish us with many examples: Thus Joseph was sold by his brethren, carried away into Egypt, and cast unjustly into prison; - David was continually persecuted by his enemies; Job was made to endure many and great afflictions, for which he blessed God; -Tobias, in the act of exercising works of mercy, lost his sight; for which affliction the Archangel Raphael gives this reason: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation (i.e., tribulation) should prove thee;" 131—St. John the Baptist was cast into prison, and also beheaded;—the Apostles were likewise imprisoned, tortured in various ways, and put to death;-the first Christians were persecuted by all the world; -and, more than all, Christ our Model was a man of sorrows."132

Look now to the reasons which men have to fear the mercies, kindnesses, favours, and benefits of heaven, bestowed in this life:—

They have to fear them,

1. Because men are generally led by them to sin more frequently, and also more

^{129 2} Tim. iii. 12.

¹³¹ Tobias xii 13. ¹³² Is. liii. 3.

¹³⁰ Acts xiv. 21.

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grievously; Holy Simeon has warned us of this, by telling us, that "Christ is set for the fall of many in Israel; and for a sign that shall be contradicted." ¹³³ And Christ himself tells us how his coming (which is the greatest of God's mercies or benefits) was the cause of many and very grievous sins: "If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin." ¹³⁴ Thus, then, the mercies of God are to be feared, lest we abuse them to our greater condemnation.

2. Because God frequently confers favours or benefits when angry, which he would not confer, but withhold, if he were appeased: so that there is a certain mercy of God which is no slight evidence of his anger. Thus God says: "Let us have pity on the wicked; and he will not learn justice." 135 Struck with these words, St. Bernard exclaims: "Far from me be this mercy; which is more to be dreaded than the severest chastisements. O Father of mercies! I desire thou shouldst be angry with me in this world, with that merciful anger, by which thou correctest thy children; but not with that, by which we are led from thee!" It is a kind of mercy, when God forbears from scourging us: but give ear to what the

¹³³ Luke ii. 34. ¹³⁴ John xv. 22. ¹³⁵ Is. xxvi. 10.

Royal Prophet says of this mercy: speaking of the reprobate, he says: "They are not in the labour of men; neither shall they be scourged like other men. Therefore pride hath held them fast; they are covered with their iniquities and their wickedness.... I studied that I might know this thing: it is labour in my sight: until I go into the sanctuary of God, and understand concerning their last ends." Referring to this passage, a very learned and pious Author says: "They who are not scourged here temporally with men, will be scourged perpetually with devils; and they who labour not here with men, will labour with devils hereafter."

3. Because favours and benefits are sometimes given by God in this life, as a compensation or temporal reward for some good work of the natural order, or for supernatural works which have been deprived of their eternal reward by the commission of mortal sin. This we clearly learn from the words of Jesus Christ: "Amen I say to you: They have received their reward." 137 St. Jerom relates, that, when St. Hilarion saw himself esteemed and honoured by men, he lamented it daily with many tears; and

¹³⁶ Ps. lxxii. 137 Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16.

that, when his disciples asked him the cause of his grief, he answered: "It seems to me, that, by this esteem of men, God is recompensing in this life the few trifling services which I do for him."

- 4. Because there are sometimes favours, benefits, or prosperities, which are the fore-runners of impending dangers or evils; as an unusual calmness on the sea is generally a warning of an approaching tempest.
- 5. Because, by the divine benefits, and the merciful forbearance of God, men are apt to become hardened in their daily negligences or sins. Like those of whom holy Job speaks: "God hath given them place for penance, and they abuse it unto pride:.... they have been rebellious to the light." 138 St. Paul shows, that the exercise of God's goodness, and patience, and long-suffering (or forbearance), is intended to lead us to penance; but that it has frequently a contrary effect: for, according to our hardness and impenitent heart, it leads us to treasure up for ourselves wrath against the day of wrath. 139 Thus, as St. Augustin says, "While God spared Pharaoh, by suspending his severe chastisements, Pharaoh became more hardened against the divine

¹³⁸ Job xxiv. 23, 13. ¹³⁹ Rom. ii. 4, 5.

will;" the divine judgments made him yield to God; but he ceased to obey, when God ceased to punish.

6. Because, at the divine tribunal, you will have to give an exact account for the use you have made of all God's mercies and favours. That we might know that this is a subject for fear, our blessed Lord says: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more."140 Thus, says St. Gregory: "When the divine gifts are increased or multiplied, the account to be rendered for those gifts also increases." On this subject for fear, St. Chrysostom brings forward the law of the Old Testament, which required as much atonement for the priest, as for all the rest of the people, when they sinned. One calf was to be immolated for the priest, and one also for the people;"141 because, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." Hence our Lord says: "Woe to thee, Corozain! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long since done penance in sack-cloth and ashes:

¹⁴⁰ Luke xii. 48. 141 Levit. iv. 3, 13, 14.

But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you." 142

From all this, you see, that the patience and merciful forbearance of God,—that the temporal gifts and earthly prosperities which he sends,—and that even the spiritual gifts and religious advantages which you receive from him—you see that all these are to be feared by you, unless they render you more grateful to him, more ardent in loving him, and more fervent and diligent in serving him; for, otherwise, you would have reason to fear that he bestows them in anger, rather than in mercy.

MEDITATION XIV.

A Comparison of one's self with the Prodigal Son.

EJACULATION: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

St. Ignatius directs us to call to mind all our sins, by examining the different stages of our past life; to consider who and what we are; and to assist ourselves herein by such comparisons, as will teach us to despise ourselves.

142 Matt. xi. 21.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

POINT I. Call to mind the History of the Prodigal Son: "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me: and he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son went abroad into a far country; and there wasted his substance, living riotously." ¹⁴³ And consider how that deluded son, having received the portion that would fall to him by inheritance, left the kindest and best of fathers, in whose house he could have enjoyed securely every abundance; -how he went into a far country,—there gave loose reins to his passions,-squandered away all he had,—and reduced himself to such a state of complete degradation, as to be a disgrace to his family. Very soon, however, he was made to feel the folly and the evil of his conduct; because it brought him to extreme poverty, and into the very depth of misery.

Reflecting on the circumstances of this history, acknowledge therein your own picture:—By your Baptism, and again by the grace of your Confirmation, and still more

143 Luke xv. 11, 12, 3 D 9 by the Holy Communion, you became, in a special manner, a son of that good Father, and a brother of Jesus Christ: renouncing Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps, in order to follow your Redeemer, you had acquired a right to your eternal inheritance,—the kingdom of heaven; your heavenly Father gave you the portion of substance, which his bounty had ordained should fall to you, viz., so many supernatural gifts which he has bestowed upon you; especially that gift of religious fervour which you once possessed,—that desire and promptitude of will to serve him, which at one time influenced your soul,—and those religious observances which you used to be more faithful and diligent in practising, &c. &c. But you—what have you done? While you were as yet young, or but a novice in your Father's house, you lived fervently and innocently, like an angel: but behold! that first fervour and devotion—the religious feeling of those happier days, behold! that first fervour and devotion—
the religious feeling of those happier days,
was quickly lost! Scarcely had you received that goodly portion, when you wandered into a far country—departed from the
rules, the devotional exercises, and the strict
observances of your Father's house;—your
notions and feelings became every day more
and more worldly;—that sanctifying grace,
h made you a true child of God, was

(consult your conscience)—was soon lost,—and your soul disfigured and degraded by many evils—by a neglect of prayer, mortification, humiliation, works of charity, and the labours of a virtuous life; and by seeking ease, pleasures, and pride! Oh! whence art thou fallen! to what art thou come!!

Point II. Proceed now with the History of the Prodigal: "And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country: and he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my Father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger?"144 And consider how that Prodigal Son, by leaving his Father, came at last to such a degree of degradation and misery, as to set himself to feed swine; and to such an extremity of want, as to desire for food the very husks which the swine did eat: but they were not given to him—the swine which he served were selfish, and repelled him. The recollection of his Father's house

¹⁴⁴ Luke xv. 14 to 17.

then rushes in upon his mind; and this remembrance of the kindest and best of parents, with whom he enjoyed abundance and every happiness, awakens his former affection, and his tears begin to flow; then, with heartfelt sorrow, he said within himself: "How many servants in my father's house abound with bread; and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

Reflecting on these circumstances, cast your eyes now upon your own soul, and again recognise in this Prodigal the picture of yourself. For, have you not, by your wanderings from duty, brought yourself to such a degree of guilt and spiritual destitution, as to cause your heavenly Father to withdraw from you those sweet consolations, which, in his service, you used to enjoy?—to such a state of tepidity, as to have lost that relish in your meditations, examinations of conscience, communions, and other devotions, which you once experienced? And have you not, in consequence of your extreme spiritual poverty, been led to seek your consolation in the things of this world—in creatures—in mere husks of swine;

unable, however, to obtain the satisfactions which you seek, and even despised by those whom you affect to please and to serve? Oh! how happy for you, if, like the Prodigal, you are made to feel your unhappiness! and if, by this means, you are led to conceive the desire, and to adopt the determination, of returning at once to your offended but loving Father, with whom you will enjoy abundance and delight! Oh! return then to him without delay! return to your duty—to your first fervour. Despise the husks of worldly amusements and carnal gratifications,—forsake the swine of your passions,—and return, like the Prodigal, to your Father's house, and he will receive you.

Point III. Proceed again with the History of the Prodigal, and see its happy conclusion: "And rising up he came to his Father. And when he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And the Father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and make merry: because this my son was dead, and is come to life again:

was lost, and is found." And consider how the Father meets, receives, and embraces his returning and repenting son;—how he clothes him with the first robe,—kills for him the fatted calf,—and celebrates his return with joy!

Shall not the consideration of these circumstances move you to grieve for having been undutiful to a Father who is so loving, so tender, so forgiving? Shall it not raise your repenting soul to an assured hope, that he will receive and forgive you at your return, as the Father received and forgave his Prodigal, but returning Son?

Look back with sorrow on your past unworthy conduct—see what commands, what duties, what observances, &c., you have transgressed; and also what occasions led you to such transgressions. Return now with fervour to the fulfilment of those transgressed commands,—to the discharge of those neglected duties, &c.; and resolve to be most careful also in avoiding the occasions which lead you astray, or which may hereafter be the cause of your falling off. Beg God's pardon, and his grace; and take the means of obtaining both; i.e., pray,—deny and mortify yourself,—and labour in

¹⁴⁵ Luke xv. 20 to 24.

works of piety and charity. For thus you will make atonement for the past, and secure to yourself a steady perseverance for the future.

Colloquy. — "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not against neaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son." For, instead of loving and serving thee, I have yielded to the evil desires of my heart, and have served my unruly passions: but, the farther I wandered from my duty to thee, the more wretched and unhappy I became; and my own sad experience has taught me, "that it is an evil and a bitter thing for me, to have left the Lord my God." With sin to have left the Lord my God." With sincere sorrow for what I have done, I now renounce my evil ways, and return to my duty. Grieved and humbled at the thought of my unhappy wanderings, I implore thy forgiveness. O God of infinite mercy! receive me once more into thy favour; clothe ceive me once more into thy favour; clothe me again with that robe of sanctifying grace, which I have lost by my sins; and restore to me the ring of thy love, which I have exchanged for the love of creatures. Having thus adorned my soul with the gifts of thy mercy, make me worthy to be admitted to thy divine banquet, the Holy Communion; that henceforth "I may abide in thee" so as never more to be separated from thee by

sin: for "it is good for me to adhere to thee, my God."—Holy Mary, Mother of God, and Refuge of sinners, obtain for me a perfect reconciliation with my offended God; and also his efficacious graces, whereby I may be enabled to serve him faithfully in future.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XV.

On returning to God by sincere Repentance, after the Example of St. Mary Magdalen.

EJACULATION: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

St. Ignatius places "The Conversion of Magdalen," in the list of Meditations given towards the end of his Exercises.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Listen to the consoling promise, which Almighty God addresses to those sinners who return to him by sincere re-

pentance: "There shall come a Redeemer.... to them that return from iniquity in Jacob, saith the Lord." And consider how, through the great goodness of God, every repenting sinner has it in his power to apply to his own soul the atoning merits of that promised Redeemer,—to be thereby restored to the grace and friendship of God,—and to be enabled to walk afterwards in the way of salvation, from which he had wandered.

If you had to undertake a long, and difficult, and dangerous journey—one which would involve great interest, and the success or failure of which would be attended with extreme consequences; you would esteem it a matter of the greatest importance, that you should be well acquainted with the way. And if, after having entered upon your journey, you should find yourself wandering, no sooner would you discover your error, than you would return back into the right way which you had lost. And if you should be so fortunate, as to find some one who could guide you securely in your return to the right path, and in the rest of your journey, how gladly would you avail yourself of this guide? and how readily would you follow him?

146 **Is. lix. 20.**Digitized by GOOGLE

Now, you have this important journey to make—you have to be constantly pursuing that way which will bring you to your last end, a happy eternity—you have to walk in the path of God's commandments. Any other way, if you persevere in following it, will bring you to infinite and endless mi-sery. But from the path of God's commandments you have (consult your conscience) unhappily wandered; and must necessarily, therefore, change your course of life, by returning to the faithful observance of your duties: and in religion, i.e., in Christ your Redeemer, you have a sure Guide, who will give you a safe return,—receive you again into his favour,—and conduct you in the rest of your journey, so as to prevent you from again losing your way. Seek, therefore, this secure Guide; and commit yourself to him with an entire confidence of obtaining from him mercy, grace, and salvation.

Point II. Listen to the cheering declaration of Him, who has given himself to be your Guide: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." And consider the examples, which, for your encouragement, you find recorded, in the

¹⁴⁷ Luke xix. 10.

Gospel, of sinners who, returning to their offended God, were received by him with

the tenderest mercy.

You have already considered one of those examples-the kind and forgiving manner in which the Father received back his undutiful son, as soon as he forsook his wanderings, and resolved to return to his duty. Recall to mind now that of the poor Publican, who went up, an unhappy sinner, into the temple; there repented of his crimes, and cried to God for mercy; and "returned home justified."148 Call to mind also the diligence with which Christ, the good Shepherd, seeks the sheep that has gone astray; and the joy with which he carries it back to the fold. 149

But a more striking and more touching example is that of the penitent Magdalen. 150 Her previous life had been so wicked, that she was a scandal to Jerusalem, being known to the whole city as "the sinner;" and she had not only sinned herself, but had caused many others to forsake their God: Indeed she was so wicked before her conversion, that, as St. Mark tells us she was possessed by seven devils.*—But He who "came to

¹⁵⁰ Luke vii. 36 to 50. 148 Luke xvii. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Luke xviii, 14.

^{* &}quot;But he rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils."—Mark xvi. 9.

seek and to save that which was lost,"151 moved her to repent sincerely of her evil conduct; and to apply to him for forgiveness, with an entire confidence of obtaining She may probably have been led to this confidence of pardon, by hearing his kind invitation to sinners: "Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."152 With the dispositions of a true penitent, she resolves at once to seek a reconciliation with her offended God, and learning that he had gone to the Pharisee's banquet, she waits not for a better opportunity; but, hurried on by her repentance, she hastens to seek her Saviour,-enters the banquet-room uninvited,-and, regardless of what any one may think of her conduct, she prostrates herself at her Lord's feet,-washes them with her penitential tears, and wipes them with the hairs of her head; and by the dispositions of her heart, which dictated these acts, she silently sues for mercy and forgiveness. The Pharisee is indignant, and calls her "a sinner;" but Jesus speaks in her favour, and pronounces her entire pardon: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith (i.e., thy confidence in my mercy) hath made thee safe—go in peace." The sincerity of her

¹⁵¹ Luke xix. 10. 102 Matt. xi. 28.

repentance,—her love of God from which it proceeded,—her confidence of mercy,—her humility,—her determination to forsake her sins, and the occasions of them—these dispositions obtained for her a perfect reconciliation with her offended God; and also his efficacious graces, which enabled her to persevere in her good resolutions. If, like Magdalen, you have forsaken your God to indulge your passions, imitate her now by returning to him with sincere repentance; and then, like her, you will be readily received, and mercifully pardoned.

Point III. Attend to the means by which this pardon is to be applied to your soul: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself....And he hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation—he hath placed in us the word of reconciliation (i.e., the power of pronouncing the words of absolution):.... For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors." And consider, that, if you would obtain the benefit of that reconciliation which Christ purchased for you on the cross, you must have recourse to him, in the person of his ministers, to whom alone he has "given the ministry of that reconciliation"—you must

^{153 2} Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.

"go and show yourself to the priest," 154 in the sacrament of penance; it is there you must prostrate yourself, like Magdalen, at the feet of Christ; and, with the dispositions of a true penitent, sue for pardon. Then you will hear the consoling "word of reconciliation" addressed to you: "I absolve thee from thy sins." These words are spoken in the name and by the authority of Christ—He pronounces them by the mouth of his minister: For "he hath placed in us (i.e., in his ministers) the word of reconciliation: for Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors."—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." 155

From these reflections on the great Mercy of God in receiving repenting sinners, conceive now in your heart, 1, A sincere detestation of your sins, because they have offended so good a God; and because they expose you to his severe chastisements, unless you return to him by repentance;—2, A desire of reconciliation with your offended God;—3, A perfect confidence in the mercy and goodness of Him, who never rejects the cry of a contrite and humbled heart;—4, A resolution to go at once, and

¹⁵⁴ Matt. viii, 4.

¹⁵⁵ John xx. 22, 23.

throw yourself into the arms of his mercy, by imploring forgiveness in the sacred Tribunal of Penance, with those penitential dispositions which led Magdalen to throw herself at her Redeemer's feet. Then, although you may be burdened with the guilt of many and grievous sins, you will, like Magdalen, become a Saint; for, your sins being forgiven, you will "return home justified." And being free from the guilt of your sins, you will be assisted by divine grace to labour henceforth in "bringing forth fruits worthy of penance," 156 i. e., in leading a life of piety towards God,—of mortification towards yourself and your passions,—and of charity towards your neighbour.

Colloquy.—"Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that I may weep day and night" for the sins whereby I have so many times offended thee, my God,—that, prostrate at thy feet, like Magdalen, I may pour forth tears of sincere repentance, imploring thy mercy? "Give ear, O Lord, to my supplication;" and "spare me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies!" Oh! that I could

156 Luke iii. 8.

lament my sins as I ought, so as to obtain thy pardon! O Jesus, my Redeemer! supply my deficiency by that atoning blood, which thou hast shed upon the cross for my salvation! O my God! forgive me, forgive me, for thy mercy's sake! I will not cease from imploring thy mercy, until thou "restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," by pronouncing, in my favour, those consoling words addressed to the penitent Magdalen: "Thy sins are forgiven thee: go in peace."

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XVI.

On the Reign of Jesus Christ.

EJACULATION: "Grant me, dear Jesus, the grace to labour and to suffer, to live and to die, for thy sake, and after thy example."

St. Ignatius, having completed what he calls "The Purgative Way" of his Spiritual Exercises, commences "The Illuminative Way" with a "Contemplation on the Reign of Jesus Christ," in order to animate us to follow Christ as our King, by an imitation of his virtues.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. In the words of the servants of king David, say to Jesus Christ: "Whatsoever our Lord the King shall command, we thy servants will willingly execute; and in what place soever thou shalt be, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be."

¹ 2 Kings xv. 15, 21.

And consider the obligation and advantages of following Christ.

of following Christ.

If there were a Prince duly appointed to be King over all God's people; if this Prince had all the qualities of a good king; if he were wise, prudent, and kind-hearted, and, from a tender love of his subjects, did all he could to promote their happiness; you would wish to be subjects of that good king.—If his enemies were your most bitter and cruel enemies; if they were continually attacking you, and robbing you of your possessions; if you were daily and hourly in danger of being completely overcome, and reduced by them to a state of perpetual and tyrannical slavery; you would, no doubt, be most anxious to be secured against their oppressions.—And if, moved with pity at your miserable condition, and with a sincere desire of delivering you from it, that good miserable condition, and with a sincere desire of delivering you from it, that good king were to engage in a warfare against those enemies, and to call upon you to assist him in this warfare; ifhe promised to fight by your side,—to share with you all the labours and difficulties of the campaign,—and to give you all the advantages of the victory, which would be a kingdom secure from enemies; and if, moreover, the victory were quite certain, provided you would only fight for him and with him; would you not most gladly engage in his service, seeing you would be certain of being delivered from your oppressions,—of obtaining perpetual peace,—and of being put in possession of a kingdom, in which you would reign happily, and without any danger of molestation. You would certainly resolve to follow this king, because the warfare would be entirely for yourself—it would concern your own fortunes only, and it would secure them.

POINT II. But where shall we find such a king? Reflect, and you will see that this is not a mere parable; for behold, Jesus Christ is appointed King over Sion; 2 All power is given to him in heaven and on earth; and he exercises this supreme power for the good of his subjects—to promote their welfare.—The enemies of Jesus Christ are the devil, the world, and the flesh; and the devil, the world, and the flesh; and those are also your enemies;—you are always liable to their attacks, and in danger of being vanquished;—the moment you yield to them, they rob you of all your merits, make you their slave, and prepare for you a dungeon of endless miseries. To relive you from this wretched condition, by enabling you to vanquish your enemies, Jesus Christ, your King, has entered upon an unceasing

² Ps. ii. 6. 3 Matt. xxviii. 18.

warfare against them; and he calls upon you to follow him in this warfare—to fight with him and for him. You have to fight against satan; against the vanities of a wicked world; against the allurements of the flesh; and against all vices. Jesus Christ, your King, engages to be with you in all your dangers; to assist you; and to enable you to overcome. He will strengthen you, during the warfare, with his graces; support you with his merits; and even feed you with his own body and blood. He will go before you in every difficulty and danger, and will prepare the way for you; all that you will have to do, is to follow him: and if you do follow him, then after the warfare is over, he will place an immortal crown on your head, and give you the kingdom of heaven for your eternal inheritance.— Therefore, now that he calls upon you to engage resolutely in this advantageous warfare against his and your enemies, what answer will you make him? will you not follow him whithersoever he leads the way? Say to him, then, as Ethai said to king David: "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, in what place soever thou shalt be, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be :....whatsoever thou shalt command, I will execute." 4

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^{4 2} Kings xv. 21, 15.

Point III. Attend to Jesus Christ, your King, declaring on what conditions he requires you to follow him: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." And consider whither you are to follow him; i.e., in what you are to imitate him: 1, You must, in imitation of him, deny yourself, by renouncing all love of self and of the world;—2, You must carry your cross after him by hearing natiently, and in a spirit of him, by bearing patiently, and in a spirit of penance, all the trials and adversities which Providence may send you;—3, You must be poor in spirit, humble of heart, mortified and chaste, obedient to the will of God, kind and charitable to yourneighbour; and endeavour to practise all the other virtues of which he has set you an example.

Lament now the cowardice, sloth, and tepidity, with which you have hitherto followed Christ, and implore his forgiveness;—resolve to be faithful to him in future;—and, with all the fervour of your soul, address to him the following Protestation:—

Colloquy.—O Jesus, my King, and sovereign Lord of all things, I acknow-

⁵ Matt. xvi. 24.

ledge that I am most unworthy of thy notice; yet, relying on thy great goodness, I offer myself now to thy service wholly and irrevocably; subjecting myself, and all that belongs to me, entirely to thy will: and I solemnly declare, in the presence of thine infinite goodness, before the Blessed Virgin thy Mother, and the whole Court of heaven, that it is my sole intention and desire, and my firm determination, to follow thee henceforth, as perfectly as I can—to imitate thee in bearing all the injuries and adversities that shall befal me, and any degree of poverty or privation, which thou shalt be pleased to send me. Take from me, if thou wilt, all earthly comforts and consolations; and be thou alone my reward: only give me thyself, and it is enough. Extend to me thy assisting and protecting hand: enable me to live henceforth in thy grace; and let it be no longer I that live, but thou that livest in me.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION VI.

On Imitating Christ, so as to verify in one's self, like St. Paul, these words: It is not now I that live, but it is Christ that liveth in me.⁶

Jesus Christ is our Model; we are called to imitate him: for, "he hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps." To imitate Christ, by following his example, we have three things to do, viz., 1st, To act as he acted;—2ndly, To suffer as he suffered;—and 3rdly, To despise and shun what he despised and shunned.

- I. In Action.——You should act, or be always striving to act, as Christ, your divine Model, acted:—
- 1. Excite and cherish in your soul (by making frequent acts) ardent and insatiable desires of suffering injuries, reproaches, and adversities of every kind. Christ had such a desire, and he cherished it, all his

⁶ Gal. ii. 20. ⁷ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

life; for it is in this sense that the holy Fathers explain these words of our Lord: "I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"

- 2. Glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; i.e., receive as joys, and as honours, all the frowns, contempts, reproaches, persecutions, &c., which Providence may send you. Thus Christ acted: "The hour is come, when the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners: Rise up, let us go: behold, he that will betray me is at hand." "10" "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "11 Thus his Apostles also acted: For "they went from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." 12
- 3. Exercise a real love for every neighbour; even for your enemies—for all who have at any time injured or aggrieved you: love them with a sincere charity;—endeavour to do them all the good you can;—beg of God to enrich them with his special graces and blessings; and to avert evils from them. For so Christ exercised charity towards all men. "He went about doing

⁸ Luke xii. 50. ¹⁰ Mark xiv. 41, 42. ¹² Acts v. 41. ¹³ Gal. vi. 14. ¹⁴ John xviii. 11.

good; and healing all manner of sickness, and every infirmity, among the people."13 He did good to those who hated him, and who even sought his life;—he prayed for his very persecutors, even when they were in the act of putting him to death; and he pleaded their excuse: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."14

4. Be content, and even rejoice, when the faults of others are attributed to you,when they are published under your name, -when the denials, excuses, and explanations, which duty obliges you to make, are not received,—when you are condemned and punished by those whom Providence has placed in authority over you,—when you are traduced from mere suspicions, from false conjectures, or from your actions being related with unfavourable colourings;—and wish that all who say or do these things against you, should be free, as far as you can make them free, from any obligation of restitution to your character. Of all this Christ has set you an example:—He took upon himself our sins; in such a manner, that they were imputed to him, and that he had to suffer and atone for them ;-he allowed himself to be falsely accused,-and,

Acts x. 38. 14 Luke xxiii. 34. Matt. iv. 23.

notwithstanding his defence or denial (which was not received), to be unjustly condemned, and executed, as if he were guilty, being considered so by the people; although he was innocence itself.

II. In Suffering.—You should suffer, or be always striving to suffer, as Christ, your divine Model, has taught you to suffer.

your divine Model, has taught you to suffer. Therefore, suffer patiently, resignedly, and silently crosses of any kind, of any weight, and from any persons: suffer all that God sends or permits;—all the malice and attacks of the devils;—all the injuries and persecutions of men;—all the afflictions that befal you both of body and mind;—all the disgrace of being thought guilty, and deserving of the punishment, when you are really innocent;—all the losses which you sustain from any misfortunes that happen;—all the privations which result from any degree of poverty in which you may be: suffer any or all of these inflictions, as much as God shall please.

That Christ has given us an example of all this, his whole life, and particularly the close of it, testifies. St. Peter, proposing this example of our blessed Lord, exhorts us to arm ourselves with a firm resolution to imitate it; and he encourages us to this imitation, by declaring, that it will put an end

to all our sins: "Christ therefore (he says) having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sins; that now he may live the rest of his time in the flesh, not after the desires of men, but according to the will of God." When St. Ignatius was asked, "by what way can any one arrive very soon at perfection?" he answered: "If God, in his goodness, send him plenty of sufferings." For, by bearing these patiently, resignedly, and silently, he will very soon become perfect.

- III. In Despising and Shunning.—You should despise and shun, or be always striving to despise and shun, what Christ, your divine Model, teaches you to despise and shun; viz.:—
- 1. Desire no praise or gratitude from any person, for any thing; and if offered to you, reject every feeling of self-complacency.
- 2. Wish that none of your superiors, or equals, or inferiors, should make any account of you, or should show you any respect, on account of your age, office, qualifications, merits, &c.

^{16 1} Pet. iv. 1, 2.

- 3. Renounce that feeling which would lead you to seek or desire from others the approval of your opinions, intentions, and counsels.
- 4. Neither seek nor desire to be in favour with any one;—wish not that any person should love you; but rather rejoice when others hate you, and when they care not for your sufferings, and regard not your sighs.

 ——As soon as you practise this, you will be superior to all the world; for nothing will be able to disturb your peace of soul, or to destroy your happiness.
- 5. Be silent under accusations, complaints, admonitions, reproaches, &c.; and abstain from excusing yourself in any way, unless duty require it. Renounce all anxiety to have your innocence made known.
- 6. Refrain from compassionating yourself; and from moaning out your grief or complaints.
- 7. Avoid seeking conveniences or consolations from any *creature*.
- 8. Abstain from relating anything in your own praise; and wish to be entirely unknown, both as to yourself and all that belongs to you.

That Christ has set us an example of all

this, and of much more than all this, is evident from the words wherein St. Paul exhorts us to imitate him: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied himself:"16 Observe, the Apostle does not tell us that Christ merely neglected and shunned all self-seeking; but that he even emptied himself; and he urges us to do the same—to be of the same mind or spirit: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;" for this is the mind, or spirit and disposition, of the true children of God.

Study therefore diligently the examples of virtue which Christ, your divine Model, has left you; meditate frequently and seriously upon them; and be continually striving to copy them so perfectly in your own life, that you may be able to say, with St. Paul; I live; no, it is not now I that live, but it is Christ that liveth in me." 17

¹⁶ Philip. ii. 5, 6, 7. ¹⁷ Gal. ii. 20.

MEDITATION XVII.

On the Two Standards under which All Mankind are Engaged.

EJACULATION: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to confirm and preserve me in thy holy service.

St. Ignatius, in order to strengthen our resolution of following Christ, directs us to consider him as our Leader who wishes to conduct us to our eternal happiness; and to look upon satan as the leader of the wicked, who is bent upon drawing all he can into everlasting misery with himself.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Attend to the admonition addressed by Josue to the Israelites: "Josue called for all Israel, and said to them: I am old and far advanced in years: Take courage; and cleave unto the Lord your God; and then no one shall be able to resist you; because the Lord your God himself will fight for you, 'as he hath promised: This only

take care of with all diligence, that you love the Lord your God. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him with a perfect and most sincere heart. But if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, you have your choice: choose this day that which pleaseth you—whom you would rather serve: but, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And all the people answered, and said: God forbid we should leave the Lord, and serve strange gods: we will serve the Lord our God, and we will be obedient to his commandments." 18

Consider that, like the Jews, you are also called upon to choose which of the two Leaders of mankind you would rather serve—Jesus Christ who will lead you to victory, peace, and happiness; or satan who, deluding his wretched followers, leads them to perpetual slavery, remorse, and misery.——If you choose Christ as your Leader, and begin to follow him, by an imitation of his example; then satan, the enemy of your salvation, will immediately rise up in opposition to the attempt: "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith." Therefore, your life upon

Josue xxiii. 2, 3, 6, 8, 9,
 10, 11; and xxiv. 14,
 15, 16, 24.

earth is necessarily a warfare—you must of necessity fight, either under the Standard of Christ, who is the Leader of God's Elect; or under that of satan, who is the leader of the reprobate. For all mankind are divided into two parties: the servants of God, assisted by the good angels, from one party, under Christ their Leader; and the wicked deluded and ensnared by the evil spirits, form the other party, under satan, who is their leader.—To one or the other of these two parties you must of necessity belong, and to one of them you do belong; for Jesus Christ declares: "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."20 --- You ought indeed to adhere to Christ; for you have already chosen him as your Leader, and you have solemnly declared, that you "will renounce satan, and all his works, and all his pomps." And now, in order to render yourself, for the future, more faithful to your engagements, and more determined in your allegiance to Jesus Christ, consider the opposite designs of each of the two leaders of mankind, and the happy or miserable condition of their followers

Point II. Attend to the warning of the Apostle, who says: "And that great dragon

20 Matt. xii. 30.

was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and satan, who seduceth the whole world.... Woe to the earth, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."²¹ And consider that the object of satan is to seduce you from your allegiance to Christ, that he may destroy your happiness, and make you miserable with himself for all eternity.

Satan was once a glorious angel in heaven, created for the possession and enjoyment of eternal happiness; but, by loving himself more than God—by yielding to self complacency and pride, which led him to rebel against his Creator, he fell from his happy destiny, and was condemned to be for ever miserable. In his fall, he drew to his standard of rebellion an innumerable multitude of other angels, and so involved them in the same eternal misery with himself. He knows that man was created for Godfor the enjoyment of that happiness which he and his angels have lost; and such is his hatred both of God, and of man, that he is bent upon working our ruin; and he employs for this purpose every delusive artifice, which his malignant hatred can invent. To accomplish this work of malice, i.e., to de-

²¹ Apoc. xii. 9, 12.

prive us of the happiness for which we were created, and to draw us into that abyss of misery into which he himself has fallen, he employs, as his ministers, those angels or evil spirits, who fell with him, and whose malice against us is equal to his own. That impious monarch of hell bids these minis-ters of his to go forth into the whole world, and to erect every where amongst mankind his standard against that of Christ;—he directs them to use every ensnaring means in their power to seduce mankind from their allegiance to God, and to engage them in his own service. The means, which they are to employ for this purpose, are all kinds of flattering suggestions, and lying delu-sions: They are to instil into the hearts of men a love of earthly possessions, of sensual pleasures, and of being praised and honoured by others; and to say to each one, as the impious tempter said to Christ: "All these will I give to thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me." 22 Obedient to these orders, they enter upon their work of destruction, going about perpetually, as so many roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour.²³ They allure man to sin, by representations of pleasure and enjoyment: these suggestions proceed (not from love, but)

²² Matt. iv. 9. 23 1 Pet. v. 8.

from the most malignant hatred,—not from a design to make man happy, but miserable—to destroy his peace and happiness in this life, and to make him the wretched victim of their malice for all eternity in the next.—Such is the object of these evil spirits, in alluring you to the standard of satan: will you, then, yield to their suggestions; and not rather declare a vigorous and perpetual war against them, under the Standard of Christ?

Point III. To strengthen your determination of renouncing satan effectually, and of adhering steadfastly to Christ, as your Leader, listen to your blessed Lord calling you to follow him, and encouraging you to be faithful in your allegiance to him: "Follow me:"24 "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life."25 And consider the object, which he has in view, in calling you to his service; and also the happy advantages of fighting under his Standard.——Seeing the wretchedness to which man was reduced by the delusions and seductions of satan, Christ came to rescue us from our misery: for this purpose he erected his Standard against that of satan; and called all men to his service,

²⁴ Matt. viii. 22. ²⁵ Apoc. ii. 10.

that he might make them happy. He chose out twelve Apostles, and sent them, as his ministers, amongst all the inhabitants of the earth; not to excite them to pride, rebellion, or plunder,—not to lead them on in the pursuit of riches or of forbidden pleasures; but "Go forth," he says, "into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" 26—teach men "the things that are for their peace,"—to be meek, and humble,—to be poor in spirit,—to be mortified,—to die to the world and themselves, that they may live to God, &c., &c.

The object of our blessed Lord in all this, is, that he may deliver us from our miseries,—that he may lead us to that happiness and peace of mind which are to be found only in a virtuous life,—and that he may bring us finally to his heavenly kingdom, where we may enjoy eternally that inconceivable happiness for which we were

created.

Point IV. Attend now to your divine Leader declaring the alternative wherein you are placed: "No man can serve two masters—you cannot serve God and mammon." And consider the necessity of renouncing satan to serve Jesus Christ. There

²⁶ Mark xvi. 15. 27 Matt. vi. 24.

is no midway—you must, of necessity, be either a servant of God, by the practice of virtue; or a slave of the devil, by the practice of iniquity. If you should be so unhappy as to choose the latter, what do you expect to gain, but a life of misery here, and an eternity of misery hereafter? But, if you rank yourself under the Standard of Christ, and remain faithful in your allegiance to him; you will then enjoy peace of conscience in this life, and the crown of immortal glory in the next. Oh! how lamortal glory in the next. Oh! how lamentable is the fact deplored by St. Chrysostom: "Jesus Christ promises us real and inestimable blessings; yet scarcely does any one regard him: the devil proffers nothing but lying delusions, with the malicious design of plunging his followers into eternal flames; and he draws all the world to his standard!" And thus do men enable satan to insult the world's Redeemer in the manto insult the world's Redeemer in the manner described by St. Cyprian: "For these my followers, I have received neither buffets, nor scourges; I promise them no heavenly kingdom, nor do I call them to paradise for the enjoyment of a happy immortality: and yet they willingly give themselves up to be complete slaves in my service; they listen to my suggestions, follow my counsels, and pursue with eagerness the way of iniquity, which I point out to them. Since they are

thus my accomplices in wickedness, is it not therefore just that they should share in my torments, by being made my companions in a miserable eternity?"

Having pondered well in your heart the fearful alternative wherein you are placed, examine now which of the two leaders you have hitherto followed, and to which you belong at the present moment;—lament the part you have unhappily taken with satan, renouncing his service from this moment and for ever;—make a firm and decisive resolution, that you will adhere faithfully hence-forth to the Standard of Jesus Christ—that, renouncing yourself and taking up your cross, renouncing yourself and taking up your cross, you will follow him by an imitation of his example; or, in other words, that you will lead a life of *Prayer*, *Mortification*, and *Charity*, according to the comprehensive meaning of these words;—and pour forth your soul in most earnest supplications to God, for grace to fulfil your resolutions; for, without his grace you can do nothing.

Colloquy.—O Jesus, my Redeemer and my King, and the Leader of God's Elect! behold I come, unworthy though I am, to offer myself to thy service, resolved, with the assistance of thy grace, to subject myself in all things to thy will. I now solemnly

declare that it is my only will and desire, my firm and fixed determination, to follow thee as my Leader; and to endeavour, on all occasions, to copy thy divine example, in order that I may thereby promote thy greater glory, and my own and neighbour's salvation. Oh! how great is the folly of those deluded souls, who, for the sake of the momentary enjoyments of this life, desert thy Standard, go over to the enemy, and are lost eternally! Of this folly I myself have hitherto been guilty. With confusion and sorrow I acknowledge the error of my conduct; and resolve that I will be faithful to thee for the time to come,that I will fight under thy Standard against all the enemies of my salvation. Oh! strengthen, I beseech thee, dearest Saviour -strengthen this my resolution; and enable me to keep it;—support and assist me in the holy warfare wherein I am engaged;— grant that, continuing faithful unto death, I may obtain that crown of life which thou hast promised to them that serve thee.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—"Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XVIII.

On the Three Classes of Men.

EJACULATION: "Lord, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?—Enable me to do thy *entire will*, without regard to my own inclinations or repugnances."

St. Ignatius, in his Meditation on this subject, divides all those who have a wish to do their duty, into three Classes, according to the different dispositions with which they offer themselves to be followers of Christ; and his object is to urge us to enter into the dispositions of the third Class, by showing us that it is the only secure one.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

The Wise Man says: "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart, and endure: join thyself to God, and endure; that thy life may be increased in the latter end. For gold and silver are tried in the fire; but ac-

ceptable men in the furnace of humilia-tion."28 From these words you see plainly, that, if you would be prepared for following Christ as your Leader, in good earnest, you must not deem it sufficient to excite within you a few passing affections, nor to conceive mere speculative desires of following him; but that you must resolve, and that you must do so sternly and decisively—you must not only make resolutions, but you must make them firm and practical—such as will be effectual. And in order that you may see clearly what the nature of your resolutions should be, consider now the Three Classes of Men who wish to take Christ for their Leader;compare yourself with each Class, as you proceed, for the purpose of discovering to which you belong;—then make such resolutions, and adopt such measures, as reason, religion, conscience, and the security of your soul, require.

Point I. Give ear to the woe denounced by the Wise Man against the *First Class* of men, who, instead of coming to the service of God with a determination to do their duty, are really bent all the while upon serving their passions: "Woe to them that are of a double heart; and to the sinner that

²⁶ Eccli. ii. 1, 2, 3, 5.

goeth on the earth two ways."29 And consider how those weak Christians, who compose this first and most defective Class, may be aptly represented by certain sick persons, who, for the sake of being cured, send for their physician; and when he comes, discovers the true nature of their disorder, and prescribes for them the proper remedies; they express a wish to be cured; but show, at the same time, that it is a mere wish, and not an efficacious resolution; for they refuse to take the remedies prescribed, as not being to take the remedies prescribed, as not being suited to their taste—they think them too bitter, and so reject them. The natural consequence is, that they remain in their sickness, and become worse every day.—It is just so with a vast number of Christians: they conceive a kind of wish to renounce their sins, that they may follow Christ; but they never begin—they remain in a state of mere wish. They do indeed form what they sall resolutions but they are only second. mere wish. They do indeed form what they call resolutions, but they are only speculative resolutions; they never proceed to render them practical—they will not employ the necessary means of virtue which religion prescribes—they will not put themselves to the least pain or inconvenience. If, for example, they are required to approach to the holy sacraments, or to perform other acts of

²⁹ Eccli. ii. 14.

piety, as the means of obtaining such graces as they stand in need of; they refuse to comply, either because they will not take the trouble, or because they have something else to do which they like better. What can these Christians expect in the end, but to receive that fearful sentence which was pronounced upon certain men in the Gospel for a similar negligence: "I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited (and who refused to come) shall taste of my supper:"30 i.e., they shall be excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

Evidently, it will not do to be in this Class of Christians; but you must rise much higher. You must not only resolve to amend your life and advance in virtue; but you must take the means which are necessary for these purposes, and you must take them immediately, before it be too late: "For the axe is already laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that doth not bring forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." 31

Point II. Give ear to another woe denounced by the Wise Man against the Second Class of Christians, who, although they do something in the service of God, yet fall far

³⁰ Luké xiv. 24.

³¹ Matt. iff. 10.

short of their duty: "Woe to them that are faint-hearted, who believe not God (i.e., who have not a sufficient confidence in him); and therefore they shall not be protected by him." And consider how the luke-warm Christians, who compose this Second Class, may be rightly compared to those sick persons who do not entirely refuse the remedies prescribed; but defer them, or take a part only: they are in such disposition as to say: "I cannot bring myself to take these remedies to-day; but to-morrow I will;"—or, "I will take so much of these remedies; the rest I cannot take, because I do not like them." These persons are "faint-hearted," and lose courage in the time of trial.

Oh! how many Catholics are there of this description? how many are there, who resolve indeed to do what is necessary for amending their life and saving their soul; but who never do really amend, either because they keep deferring the execution of their resolutions from day to day, instead of beginning there and then; or because they execute them only by halves? By thus allowing the enemy to delude them into mere half measures, they remain always enslaved to the same vices.

²² Eccli. ii. 15.

As it is evident that you must not rank yourself with the First Class of Christians, so is it equally clear that you must not join the Second; but that you must enter upon God's service with much more perfect dispositions. When God calls you to perform this or that particular duty, you must be in such disposition as to obey at once, without delay; and to obey entirely, by doing the whole of what is required of you: "Today, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your heart;" but listen to his word: and pray that God may give you grace to obey him in such a manner, that you may become every day more and more pleasing to him.

Point III. They who seek God with an insincere or "double heart," form the First Class of Christians; they who seek him with an irresolute or "faint heart," compose the Second; and against each of these Classes you have heard the Wise Man denouncing a "Woe." And now give ear to him again promising the divine mercy and protection to those of the Third Class, who seek God with a true and sincere heart: "God is compassionate and merciful, and a Protector to all that seek him in truth;" is i.e., in real good earnest. And consider that it is in this

³³ Eccli. ii. 13.

manner you must seek God, if you would succeed in finding him—it is in this manner you must follow Christ, if you would obtain that crown of life which he promises to his true followers.

Thus it was that the Apostles acted: when Christ called them, they obeyed at once, and entirely—they immediately "left all things and followed him." When St. Paul, on his way to Damascus, was reproved and admonished by Christ, he gave himself up entirely at the first admonition; "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"35 The first Converts acted in the same manner; for no sooner were they convinced, than "they had compunction in their heart;" and they went immediately to the Apostles, and said to them: "What shall we do, men and brethren?" ³⁶ i.e., we are prepared to do all that is required of us, as soon as we know what it is. So must you also act: you must be resolute and courageous, prepared at once to do your entire duty—to follow Christ whithersoever he shall call you. Then you will experience that "God is compassionate and merciful" to you; you will feel that he is your continual "Protector," enabling you to

³⁵ Acts ix. 6. 36 Acts ii. 37.

walk uninjured "upon the asp and the basilisk, and to trample under foot the lion and the dragon." And though you should behold "a thousand fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand," you will find that "no evil shall come nigh you," because "you will dwell securely in the aid of the Most High—you will abide under the protection of the God of Jacob." Even if all the enemies of your salvation should surround you at once—"if armies in camp should stand together against you," you will have no cause for trouble—"your heart need not fear,"38 because God will be with you, assisting you, and preserving you from harm. For so he declares by his Prophet: "Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee;" i.e., thou hast given thyself up, in good earnest, to be really my servant; so that I have chosen thee: therefore, "fear not, for I am with thee; turn not aside, for I am thy God; I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee, and my right hand hath upheld thee. Behold all that fight against thee shall be confounded and ashamed—they shall be as nothing. For I am the Lord thy God, who take thee by the hand, and say to thee: Fear not—I have helped thee." 39

³⁷ Ps. x. 13, 7, 10, 1. ³⁸ Is. xli. 9, &c. ³⁸ Ps. xxvi. 3.

Colloquy.—O Jesus, my Lord and my God! O compassionate and merciful Redeemer! who art a "Protector to all them that seek thee in truth," give me that sincerity and earnestness in seeking thee which thou requirest. Alas! how tepid and negligent, how weak and irresolute have I hitherto been in following thee! And though I resolve now to do better, yet I cannot expect any improvement, unless thou stretch pect any improvement, unless thou stretch out to me thy helping and supporting hand. Oh! assist my weakness! strengthen and support me in thy holy service! for the only desire of my heart is to do my entire duty.

—I commit myself, and all that belongs to me, into the hands of thy mercy: "Do with me as best pleaseth thee, and is most for thy honour: put me where thou wilt, and do with me in all things according to the still." with me in all things according to thy will: Lo, I am thy servant, ready to obey thee in all things; for I do not desire to live for myself, but for thee; oh! grant that I may live for thee perfectly and worthily ?"40

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—" Receive, O Lord;" page v.

[&]quot; Imita. of Christ, b. 3, c. 15, n. 2.

MEDITATION XIX.

On the Three Degrees of Humility; and the Necessity
of Leading a more Perfect Life, in order to Arrive
at the Third.

EJACULATION: "Now I begin: let this be the change of the right hand of the Most High."

St. Ignatius describes to us three Degrees of Humility, or, in other words, three Degrees of submission and conformity to God's will, the third of which contains a perfect life; and he directs us to supplicate the divine Goodness for grace to enable us to arrive at this perfect degree.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Learn from the example of Jesus Christ what should be the most ardent desire of your heart: "In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law, in the midst of my heart." And con-

⁴¹ Ps. xxxix. 8, 9.

sider the three Degrees of Humility, i.e., of submission to God's law, and conformity to his will; for the purpose of animating yourself to a practical desire of the third:—

- 1. The first and lowest Degree of Humility consists in having so far subjected yourself to the will of God, as to be ready to endure any loss or suffering, even death itself, rather than offend him by mortal sin: rather than consent to such a sin, you must be disposed to risk any consequences whatsoever. disposition is absolutely necessary for salva-tion; for he that loves his life, or anything else, more than God, is not worthy of God.42 "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"43 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or famine? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? I am sure (quite determined) that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord."44
- 2. The second Degree of Humility requires a more perfect disposition; for it

⁴⁹ Matt. x. 37, 38, 39. Luke xiv. 26. 43 Matt. xvi. 26. 44 Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.

consists in being so submissive and conformable to God's will, as to be disposed to suffer in like manner any loss or privation, any contempt or disgrace, any pain or infliction, or any kind of death, rather than offend God by a deliberate venial sin. Although this Degree is not absolutely necessary for salvation, yet it is necessary in many respects; especially as a means of obtaining the grace of final perseverance: for they who do not strive earnestly to arrive at this second Degree, will fall even below the first: they are lukewarm; and to such God says: "Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth."

3. The third Degree of Humility is perfect submission—perfect conformity to the divine will: and it consists (not only in being ready, but) in being sincerely wishful to receive, from the hand of God, whatever it shall please him to send—in being indifferent as to your own will, from a real desire that his may be done; so that, on all occasions, and under all circumstances, you may be able to say from your heart, like Jesus in the Garden: "Father, not my will, but thine be done." 46 Yet, knowing that no life can be more pleasing to God, than that of Christ,

⁴⁶ Apoc. iii. 16.

⁴ Luke xxii. 42.

and that the more your life shall accord with his, the more pleasing you will become in his sight: from the sole motive of wishing to resemble your divine Model, you should be better pleased and should really rejoice, when, instead of earthly comforts, God sends you poverty, humiliations, and sufferings; because, under these circumstances, (if you receive them in a proper spirit,) you are more "conformable to the image of his Son," whose poverty was such that "he had not a place whereon to lay his head; and who humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." 49

Compare your dispositions with these three degrees of submission and conformity to the divine will;—pour forth your most fervent supplications to God, begging that he would enable you to succeed in arriving at the third;—and in order that love and gratitude may spur you on to more vigorous endeavours in future, proceed now to consider the many favours and blessings which heaven has already heaped upon you.

POINT II. Address your God, your bountiful Benefactor, with the grateful feeling of the Psalmist: "What shall I render to the

⁴⁷ Rom. viii. 29. 48 Matt. viii. 20. 49 Philip. ii. 8.

Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?"50 And consider how great, and precious, and innumerable are the benefits, which God has conferred upon you, from the first instant of your vocation to his service, till the present time. No one knows those benefits better than yourself. Consider well the end for which you were called to serve God: namely, that you might perfect his image in your soul, by becoming conformable to him in all things, that so you may be fit to be united to him in heaven; call to mind also the many and power-ful means wherewith Christ has furnished you, in his Religion, for arriving at this end; and you will see, that, whenever you wander from that end, or make no advances towards it, you have no one to blame but yourself: the fault consists solely in this, that you make no use, or a negligent use, of the means of virtue which you possess. Of this, therefore, accuse yourself now before God; resolve to do better in future; and adopt measures for that purpose.

Point III. With sentiments of sincere sorrow for all your past negligences, say to your merciful, but offended God, in the words of the penitent Ezechias: "I will

⁵⁰ Ps. cav. 12.

recount to thee all my years, in the bitterness of my soul."51 And consider how far your past life has fallen short of that submission to the divine will, at which you should be constantly aiming.—Set before your eyes, in God's presence, the life which you have hitherto led, since he called you to his service: you knew it to be God's will, that you should "bring forth good fruits;" and that you should be always advancing in virtue and merit: but, instead of bringing forth good fruits, see what evils you have produced? what spiritual losses you have sustained by your negligent or tepid use of the means of virtue, which you have so abundantly enjoyed, and of which God required you to make a diligent use. See how you have gone astray from the path of duty, by wandering daily to a greater distance from that perfection, or entire submission to God's will, towards which you ought to have been perpetually advancing: see how near you may now perhaps be to the last degree of tepidity; and therefore to a falling off into some mortal transgressions; and, indeed, how doubtful it is, whether you are not in that fearful state already, and therefore below even the first degree of Humility? therefore below even the first degree of Humility?

⁵¹ Is. xxxviii. 15.

For, in comparing your life with that of Christ, do you not find, that, instead of your's being similar to his, it is altogether dissimilar? In comparing it with your Rule of Life, do you not find, that, far from your life being a faithful observance of your rule, it is a daily neglect or transgression of it? Was it for this, that God chose you from amongst the thousands who are buried in iniquity and error,—admitted you to the sacrament of his love,—and called you, in a special manner, to his service? Oh! humble yourself before God;—lament your having served him so ill;—resolve to do better in future,—and to take the proper means for this purpose.

Colloquy.—Behold me, O Lord, here in thy presence as an unhappy criminal, humbled and grieved at the sight of the many sins whereby I have transgressed thy law, and rebelled against thy adorable will! Oh! pardon me, for thy mercy's sake! In the name, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, impart to me those heavenly lights, which will show me the wretched state of my soul;—give me that spirit of compunction, which will enable me to detest my sins, as I ought;—and infuse into my heart such a deep sense of my unworthiness, and such a firm confidence in thy

goodness, as will obtain for me thy entire forgiveness;—and, in addition to these favours, bestow upon me also such efficacious graces as will preserve me from ever offend-

ing thee any more.

I know that I owe an entire obedience to thy will, and that that obedience obliges me to be prepared rather to die than ever offend thee. This, therefore, is now my firm and fixed resolution: henceforth, by the help of thy grace, I will avoid sin with the greatest care; and will labour diligently, by means of prayer, mortification, and charity, to dry up the sources from which it springs.

O Mary, the Refuge of sinners, and Help of Christians, do thou take me under thy protection, and help me to accomplish what I have resolved.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION VII.

On the Daily Exercise of Humility.

The Exercise of Humility is so pleasing to God, and of such advantage to us, that, according to a revelation made to St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, any person who shall have in himself perfect Humility, will most easily obtain the love of God, without employing any other exercise to acquire it; and that no human heart was ever perfectly humble, without being also inflamed with the love of God. And the reason of it is this: The love of God proceeds from an appreciation of God above all things; but the appreciation of God above all things contains a depreciation of all that is not God; and, consequently, of one's own self, with respect to God: but this depreciation of self is an act of Humility.

A virtuous and religious life is a perpetual Exercise of Humility: for no one can become truly religious, unless, from a motive of humility, he despise the world,—all his hopes in it,—his conveniences and indulgences,—his flesh,—his natural inclinations,—and his entire self;—and consider all others as better than himself.⁵² Consequently, when Almighty God calls us to his service, he accompanies the call with a grace, which, if corresponded with, will bring us to true humility: but if this grace be not corresponded with—if the Exercise of Humility be given up, then our call to God's service loses its effect, we cease to be really religious, and we take our place under

⁵² Philip, ii, 3.

the standard of Lucifer, the spirit of pride. As none but proud spirits were cast out of heaven; so none but proud souls lose the grace of persevering in God's service.

Our blessed Lord teaches us the neces-

sity of Exercising Humility, when he says: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."53 He teaches us the same by his own example; and to his example he refers us, when he says: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." In giving us this example, he chose for himself such things and such circumstances, as the world esteems mean and low:—He would be born. for instance, in a poor stable,—at Bethlehem, a poor village,—and would be "wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger;"—he chose to live, during his whole life, in a low station,—to pass, in the eyes of the people, for the son of a poor carpenter, when he was in reality the Son of God,—and, for his individual companions, he chose twelve poor fishermen;—he did not disdain to do the lowliest offices, declaring that he "came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" -he never sought his own glory, nor the praises of men, in anything that he did;

⁵³ Matt. xviii. 3.

⁵⁴ Matt. xi. 29.

but performed all his actions purely for the glory of his heavenly Father;—when men would have published his miraculous works, he bade them not;—and when they offered him honours, he "fled from them into the mountain himself alone;"—during his Passion, he submitted to the most outrageous injuries and affronts, without murmur or complaint, and without saying anything to free himself from such unworthy treatment: "When he was reviled, he did not revile; when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly; leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps."55

Moved by this example of your blessed Lord, humble yourself before God and man: for, if Christ your Model humbled himself for your example, you cannot be his follower, unless you endeavour to practise the like humility. Bear in mind this truth: that the measure of your humility is the measure of your entire sanctity; because in proportion as you come nearer to an imitation of Christ, just in such proportion do you advance in real sanctity.

And certainly, if you look into yourself, and see the real and about the real sanctity.

and see who you are, and what you are, you will find reasons more than sufficient to

^{55 1} Pet. ii. 21, 23. F 2

humble yourself to the very dust whereon you tread: truth will compel you to make, with regard to yourself, the following acknowledgements:—

- 1. I am nothing: "If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." 56
- 2. I have nothing: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received; why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." 58
- 3. I can do nothing: "Without me, you can do nothing." "We are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." "61
- 4. I am worth nothing: "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants." 62

⁵⁶ Gal. vi. 3. ⁵⁹ John xv. 5. ⁶² Luke xvii. 10.

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. iv. 7. ⁶⁰ 2 Cor. iii. 5. ⁵⁸ Apoc. iii. 17. ⁶¹ Ps. cxxvi. 1.

- 5. I am good for nothing: "If the salt lose its savour, it is good for nothing any more but to cast out, and to be trodden on by men." 63
- 6. I deserve nothing: "By the grace of God (and not by any merit of my own), I am what I am." "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man may glory: for we are his workmanship." "65"
- 7. I ought to prefer all others before myself: "Let nothing be done through contention, neither by vain glory; but, in humility, let each esteem others better than themselves; each one not considering the things that are his own, but those that are other men's: for let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus."66

In accordance with these acknowledgements, which truth requires you to make, adopt the following practices:—

I. HUMILIATION OF THE HEART.

1. At all times, look upon yourself as being most unworthy of the divine presence,

⁶³ Matt. v. 13. 64 1 Cor. xv. 10.

⁶⁵ Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. 66 Philip. ii. 3, 4, 5.

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- —as being unworthy of any of God's favours,—and as a fit object for his severest indignation. Frequently say to God from your heart: "I am unworthy to appear in thy holy presence."
- 2. Look upon yourself as being unworthy of any society with mankind.
- 3. Consider your proper place to be below all other creatures; even below those who are condemned eternally;—descend into the abyss of your nothingness; and even below this, into the very depth of your sinfulness.
- 4. Rejoice in being put down; and at meeting with contempt, depressions, and humiliations of every kind: as a stone is at rest, when it is as near as it can get to its centre. Now, your centre is your nothingness and your sinfulness.
- 5. Be sorry and grieved in your heart, when you have to receive esteem or honour from men: as a stone, when it is raised up, cannot rest, if it has no real foundation to rest upon.
- 6. Hate your own self, even more than you hate the devil; because, by having wilfully consented to sin, you have injured yourself infinitely more than the devil injures you. The devil is your enemy; but

all that within you, which is understood by the word "self," is by far your worst and most fatal enemy.

- 7. Never trust, but always suspect your-self, as a robber and destroyer of your own happiness: since your soul is never robbed of God's grace, and will never be destroyed eternally, except by your own self.—(St. Chrys.)
- 8. In all that you do, strive to disregard and forget yourself; and wish to be disregarded and forgotten also by others;—and always be content with the meanest and most abject things: for what can be due to him, who, of himself, is nothing, and far worse than nothing; and who, of himself, can do nothing but evil?

II. HUMILIATIONS IN YOUR WORDS:-

1. From a real conviction of heart, address yourself in abject and reproachful terms: Thus, when David was pursued by Saul, he applied to himself terms of this kind, saying: "After whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog; after a flea." Thus also Job "said to rottenness: Thou art my father; and to worms: My mother and my sister." St. Paul, likewise, in conjunction

with the rest of the Apostles, styles himself, "the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all." 69

- 2. Accuse yourself before God; and, when occasions offer, before your superiors, and before your equals: "The just is first accuser of himself." 70
- 3. When not required to speak, keep silence; from this motive, that you are unworthy of addressing others.
- 4. Never say anything that tends to your own praise or estimation, unless the glory of God requires it.
- 5. Abstain from complaining of or contradicting any one, unless justice require it;—do not dispute or contend with any one, except when there are circumstances which render it necessary;—sometimes be silent, when your silence will turn to your own confusion; for this is the spirit of Christ, of whom the Prophet Isaias says: "He opened not his mouth; he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth." "And some rising up, bore false witness against him. And the high-priest asked Jesus, saying: Answerest thou nothing

^{60 1} Cor. iv. 9, 13. 70 Prov. xviii. 17. 71 Is. liii. 7.

to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men? But he held his peace and answered nothing."⁷²

III. HUMILIATIONS IN YOUR ACTS.

- 1. Be ready to receive and discharge low and abject offices, looking upon yourself, like the Royal Prophet, as a beast of burden: "I am become as a beast before thee."⁷³
- 2. Be beforehand with others in showing them marks of honour, according to the direction of St. Paul, who says: "With honour prevent one another."74
- 3. Be meek, mild, and affable towards every one, in obedience to these words of Christ: "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart."⁷⁵
- 4. Throw no difficulties in the way of those whom Providence has placed in authority over you, as to their government in your regard; unless some real necessity require it. For so Christ acted all his life towards his blessed Mother and St. Joseph; and towards those who were the rulers where

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⁷² Mark xiv. 57, 60, 61.

⁷⁴ Rom. xii. 10.

he lived, although those rulers exercised their power most unjustly.

By a constant and genuine practice of these and similar humiliations, you will become truly humble; and you will thereby render God propitious to you, and attentive to your prayers. For it is to the prayers of the humble that he listens—their petitions never go unregarded: "To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words?"⁷⁶ "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold."77 "For he hath had regard to the prayer of the humble; and he hath not despised their petition."78 Consequently, as you advance in humility, you will advance also in other virtues; because you will have more abundant graces to assist you: for whilst "God resisteth the proud, to the humble he giveth grace."79

⁷⁶ Is. lxvi. 2.

⁷⁸ Ps. ci. 18.

⁷⁷ Eccli. xxxv. 21. ⁷⁹ 1 Pet. v. 5.

MEDITATION XX.

On the Happiness of Leading a Perfect Life; and On the Rules for Election, as Means of urging you on in your Way to Perfection.

EJACULATION: "Give me the grace, O Lord, to do what thou commandest; and command what thou wilt."

St. Ignatius concludes his Rules for Election, 1st, by showing how we should regulate our external life in accordance with our last end, without seeking or desiring any thing else, but the glory of God and our own salvation; and, 2ndly, by laying down, for our interior life, this important principle: "Let every one be thoroughly convinced, that he will advance in virtue so far only, as he shall lay aside the love of himself, and of his own ease and convenience."

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

POINT I. Attend to the voice of your God, declaring what blessings he has in reserve for you, if you serve him faithfully:

"Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer: I am the Lord thy God, who teach thee profitable things, and who govern thee in the way that thou walkest. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! thy peace had then been as a river, and thy justice as the waves of the sea....Thou art my servant, for in thee will I glory."80 And consider how great will be the glory, the peace, the consolations, and other advantages, which you will derive from serving God faithfully and diligently: 1, What a source of edification will your fidelity in God's service be cation will your fidelity in God's service be to those amongst whom you live? and therefore what glory it will procure for God, and what merit for yourself?—2, What tranquillity of mind, and peace of conscience, it will give you?—3, What an abundant supply of graces, and heavenly favours, will it obtain for you?—4, What security in the divine protection, and unshaken confidence towards God, it will give you during life? what calmages and sweet you, during life? what calmness and sweet consolation, in death? and what an assured hope of being one day put in possession of that eternal happiness, for which you were created?

Ponder well in your heart these inestimable advantages, together with the sub-

⁶⁰ Is. xlviii. 17, 18; and xlix. 3.

stance of the last Meditation;—conceive therefrom an ardent desire of leading a life of virtue and perfection;—and adopt, in practice, the reasoning contained in the following Point.

Point II. Address your God in the words and dispositions of the Royal Prophet: "Give me understanding, O Lord; and I will search thy law, and I will keep it with my whole heart." ⁸¹ And consider in what way you may always search out the divine law, and may urge yourself effectually to keep it: you may do so, by reasoning with yourself, on all occasions, in the following manner:—

- 1. If some particular friend, for whose welfare I am solicitous, were to consult me as to the kind of life he should lead; what advice would I give him? Such, then, is the advice which I should take for myself: and I will take it from this moment.
- 2. If I were now at the point of death, what should I wish my life to have been? and what should I wish it not to have been? Now, therefore, whilst time remains for me, (and how long it will remain, I cannot tell,) I will adopt such a life, as I know I shall wish then to have led.

⁸¹ Ps. cxviii. 34.

- 3. If I were, this moment, placed before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, what kind of life would give me confidence and consolation? and what kind would terrify me with contrary feelings? I see therefore the course I must now pursue; and I am resolved to begin, from this very moment, to pursue it.
- 4. If I were now in Purgatory, condemned to suffer, during many years, the excruciating tortures of that fiery prison; how should I wish then to have lived? When I shall come (if ever I do) into God's presence in heaven, and, beholding his divine perfections, shall see how worthy he is of all love and service; oh! how shall I then wish that I had served him better! Therefore, I will serve him better from this time: "I have said: Now I begin; let this be the change of the right hand of the Most High."

Point III. Attend therefore, to the admonition of the Prophet, which will serve to confirm you in your present resolution: "Serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn not aside after vain things, which shall never profit you, because they are vain." BE And consider how vain and frivolous are all those things which keep you from the fervent

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pursuit of perfection. They are such as these:—

- 1. A certain fear of facing the difficulties which self-love creates; but which, in reality, are no difficulties, except in your imagination: it is a far less difficulty to overcome self-love, than to satisfy its cravings.
- 2. A delusive notion that you will find too much restraint and wearisomeness in keeping a constant watch over your heart and your senses. This notion may well be called "delusive;" because if, in consequence of it, you neglect the important duty of constant vigilance, that negligence produces nothing but troubles and miseries—a continual uneasiness of conscience.
- 3. A pusillanimous dread of a few trifling mortifications and self-denials; or a weak and foolish attachment to certain little comforts, which you have not the resolution to give up; but for which, if you were to give them up, you would be repaid a hundred-fold even in this life, besides that immense reward which you would receive in the next.

Examine now how far you have allowed these and such like things to hinder you in God's service, and to withdraw you from the path of perfection. Place before your eyes

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the example which Christ has given you in this respect; and resolve, firmly and generously, to follow it in future. Rest not satisfied with making a mere general resolution on this head; but, by descending to particulars, strive to render your resolution something special and practical. Remember, your resolution is not practical, unless you determine on the means of reducing it to practice. Renew therefore your fervour and diligence in the use of those three efficacious means, which have been so repeatedly recommended to you: for, to exercise yourself in acts of Piety, Mortification, and Charity, is far better than to labour in laying up treasures of gold.

Collowr.—Ah! what a subject for me of confusion and grief, to find myself continually so rebellious to thee, my God; falling, as I do, day after day into the same faults, and falling into them so frequently,—so easily,—so wilfully,—so grievously,—and after having promised thee, so many times, that I would never commit them any more! Oh! what must be the perversity of my heart, to lead me thus to commit so much evil—to commit it in thy presence,—for the sake of the merest trifles,—knowing, at the time, how hateful sin is in thy sight,—and even employing thy very gifts for the pur-

pose of offending thee, and of rendering myself restless and unhappy! I acknowledge, O God, that, instead of favours, I deserve thy severest chastisements; yet, confiding in the multitude of thy tender mercies, I crave thy pardon with an assured hope of obtaining it. Oh! forgive me, for thy mercy's sake—pardon me what is past; and I resolve to be obedient to thy will in future. Assist me, dear Jesus, to fulfil my resolution. And do thou, O Mary, strengthen my weakness with the aid of thy powerful intercession.

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XXI.

On the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EJACULATION: "Enable me, dear Jesus, to die to the world for the love of thee; who hast died upon the cross for the love of me."

St. Ignatius directs us, in meditating on our Lord's Passion, to beg of God such sentiments and feelings as correspond with the subject; viz., sorrow, confusion,

and self-reproach, at the consideration of those sufferings which our sins have inflicted on our blessed Lord.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Listen to your blessed Lord inviting you to reflect attentively on his Passion, and on the circumstances which aggravated his sufferings: "All ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow, like to my sorrow." And consider what Christ has suffered for your sake; and, turning your eyes at the same time upon yourself, see the reasons you have for sorrow, confusion, and self-reproach.— Imagine, then, that you see Christ going through the different stages of his Passion, and that you hear him saying to you:—

1. I am esteemed by men at a very low rate—I am despised, hated, and rejected by all the world—I am treated as "the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people." You seek to be highly appreciated by others; and to be honoured and esteemed by all that know you.

⁸³ Lam. i. 12. 84 Ps. xxi. 7.

- 2. I pray with fervour and perseverance, falling prostrate on the ground, and sweating blood.—You are cold in your devotions, giving way to inconstancy, to sloth, and distractions.
- 3. I am betrayed, even by my own chosen disciple, into the hands of my enemies; and I kiss the traitor when he is in the very act of his treachery, receiving him still as a "friend."——You cannot bear to receive or put up with an injury; and, instead of forgiving your enemies, you indulge your feelings of vexation, and meditate revenge against them.
- 4. I submit patiently to have my character torn to pieces by unjust accusations, and false testimonies; and to be loaded with contumilies and reproaches of the most injurious kind.——You cannot endure to hear the least word uttered against you, even when you know that nothing is said of you but what is perfectly true; but you wish to receive the commendations and praises of men.
- 5. I willingly submit to be blind-folded, buffeted, and spit upon, and to be treated as a fool by the multitude.——You allow your eyes to wander everywhere without restraint, and frequently where they ought not; and, instead of humbly looking upon ill-treat-

ment as your due, you resist it with indignation and with feelings of resentment.

- 6. I suffer patiently and voluntarily a most inhuman scourging, which renders my body one continuous wound from head to foot.—You can scarcely offer the least violence or pain to your sinful flesh; or bear the slight mortifications of religious discipline.
- 7. I am clothed, in derision, with a purple garment; have a crown of sharp thorns pressed upon my head; and am scornfully treated by the people as a mock-king.—
 You make your clothing an object of luxury and vanity; and, instead of loving humiliations and contempt, you would be proud to wear the crown of some earthly dignity—to be raised to some office which is honoured amongst men.
- 8. Far from being compassionated or relieved in my sufferings, I am insulted in them, by having vinegar and gall offered me to drink.——You seek earthly consolation, as soon as the least sickness or affliction befalls you; and, at all times, you desire to have such things as please your taste, and seek every indulgence in your eating and drinking.

Be confounded and grieved at the oppo-

sition, which you find existing, between your life, and the example of your suffering Lord;—lament your vices, which produce that opposition;—beg of God to pardon your past unworthy conduct;—resolve to correct it in future,—and adopt effectual means for this purpose.

Point II. Hear the Almighty saying to you, "as it was answered to Moses: See that thou do all things according to the pattern which was shown thee on the Mount." And contemplate your suffering Lord as setting you a Pattern of all virtues:—

- 1. He voluntarily suffers himself to be treated, as "the outcast of the people;" and, in a manner, to be trodden upon by men, as if he were "a worm, and no man;" he allows Barabbas, a murderer, to be preferred before him; and he refuses not to die upon a cross between two thieves, appearing in the eyes of the people as if he were as guilty as they; so that in him "the Scripture was fulfilled which saith: And with the wicked he was reputed." The What an example of Humility for your imitation!
 - 2. He gives up all things, even his very

⁸⁵ Heb. viii 5. 86 Ps. xxi. 7. 87 Mark xv. 28.

clothes; he dies possessing nothing but the cross—the instrument of his torture, to which he is nailed; and long before he had declared, that he had not even "where to lay his head."——What an example of POVERTY for your imitation!

- 8. He is loaded with calumnies of all kinds, except on the subject of Chastity; and on this subject his example is such, that even the malice of his bitterest enemies durst not attempt to frame any accusation against him.—What an example of Chastity for your imitation!
- 4. He enters upon his Passion with a perfect disposition to comply with the will of his heavenly Father in all things: "Father, not my will, but thine be done."88 "He became obedient unto death; even to the death of the Cross."89——What an example of Obedience for your imitation!
- 5. He embraces the traitor Judas, styling him "friend;" and he prays for his very executioners, pleading their ignorance as some excuse for their cruelty against him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What an example of MEEKNESS, and LOVE OF ENEMIES, for your imitation!

Luke xxii. 42. Philip. ii. 8. Luke xxiii. 34.

- 6. He endures insults, reproaches, false accusations, torments, &c., without murmur or complaint, and without saying anything to free himself from such treatment. Even his enemies are in admiration at his silence: "Answerest thou nothing (they said) to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men? But he held his peace, and answered nothing." "91——What an example of SILENCE under injuries, sufferings, &c., for your imitation!
- 7. He goes cheerfully on towards Calvary, carrying his cross till he actually faints and falls beneath its weight.—What an example of Labouring for the glory of God, and the salvation of man, for your imitation!
- 8. He passes the whole night in sufferings, without sleep,—seeks no relief or compassion in his sufferings,—not only bears his cross, but is nailed to it,—and dies upon it in the most excruciating torments.—
 What an example of entire Mortification, and of patient Suffering, for your imitation!

Resolve to imitate this Example of your suffering Lord, and be continually striving to copy it in your own life—" See that you

⁹¹ Mark xiv. 60, 61.

do all things according to this pattern which was shown you on the Mount."

Point III. Enter now into the sentiments and feelings of St. Paul, saying with him from your heart: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." And consider how the sufferings of Christ serve to sweeten, for his true servants, all that they can possibly have to endure in his service:—

- 1. Do you find the regular discipline of religious observances severe or grievous to you? Christ sweetens all this by reminding you of the scourges, thorns, and nails, wherewith he was tormented;—
- 2. Do you find a grievance in the treatment you receive from those who are placed in authority over you? Christ sweetens it, by his submission to Annas, Caiphas, and Pilate; by becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross;—
- 3. Do you find any grievance in your food, clothing, or sleeping? Christ sweetens it, by having gall and vinegar offered to

⁹² Gal. vi. 14.

him;—by being stripped of his clothes; and by dying on the hard wood of the cross, to which he was fastened;—

- 4. Do you feel yourself aggrieved at what you have to endure from the tongues of men, by detraction, calumny, false accusations, &c.? Christ sweetens all these things, by what he endured of the same kind;—
- 5. Do you find any difficulty in resigning yourself to the infirmities, pains, and other sufferings, which Providence sends you? Christ sweetens them, by the agonising torments which he endured on the cross for your salvation.

Be now yourself the judge: who ought rather to be chastised and scourged by the Justice of God—Christ or you? Reflect seriously on this question; and henceforth, for Christ's sake, look upon all the trials, contradictions, sufferings, and crosses of every kind, which Providence sends you, as special marks of God's love for you. "To them that love God, all things work together unto good; to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be Saints. For whom he foreknew (to be Saints), them he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son." 93

⁹³ Rom. viii. 28, 29.

Colloquy.—O Jesus, my Saviour and Redeemer! "What shall I render to thee, for all that thou hast rendered to me"-for all that thou hast done and suffered for my sake? What gift can man offer thee, that will be an adequate return? I owe my whole self to thee, for the benefit of my creation;—I owe the same, for that of my continual preservation: But what advantage would creation and preservation have been would creation and preservation have been to me, if I had not been redeemed from eternal misery? what therefore do I owe thee, for this still greater benefit of my redemption—for the sufferings and death which thou hast endured for me? Were I to give my life for thee, I could give no more; and yet, it would not be an equal return. Since the opportunity of giving thee life for life be not afforded me, most willingly do I offer thee all I have: Receive then, O Lord, in thee all I have: Receive then, O Lord, in testimony of my love and gratitude, the oblation of my whole self, with all that I possess: accept my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my will, that they may be employed wholly for thee—I subject them totally to the disposal of thy will. All that I desire to possess during life, is an ardent love of thee, together with thy grace: grant me, O Lord, this one request; I am then sufficiently rich, and nothing more do I ask. Task.

"Our Father."—" Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ;" page v.

MEDITATION XXII.

On the Dolours of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

EJACULATION: "Holy Mary, Queen of Martyrs, pray for me."

St. Ignatius, having given us instructions how to meditate on the Passion of our Lord, says that we should meditate also on the Grief and Desolation of the blessed Virgin.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Give ear to the Prophet Jeremias, lamenting over the "Daughter of Jerusalem," on account of the greatness of her sorrows: "To what shall I liken thee, O Daughter of Jerusalem? to what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O Virgin Daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction." And consider the sorrows wherewith the heart of the blessed Virgin was afflicted, during the Passion of

⁹⁴ Lam. ii. 13.

her divine Son. Reflect, then, on that sword of sorrow which pierced her heart, when, being present in Pilate's hall, she heard the accusations brought against Him whom she loved;—when she saw him treated with mockery and contempt, by Herod and his whole court;—when she heard the people declaring him to be more deserving of death, than Barabbas, who had been imprisoned for sedition and murder; -when she saw and heard the blows and stripes which he received, during the time that he was tied to the pillar;—when she beheld the crown of thorns pressed on his head, and the contemptuous mockery wherewith he was treated by the soldiers;—when she heard the sentence of death pronounced against him;—when she followed him to Calvary;—and beheld him on the Cross, agonizing, dying, and dead!

Consider how the blessed Virgin suffered,

from all this, a most painful and afflicting

Martyrdom :--

Her sufferings were most intense,

1. Because, in proportion as we love any good, we hate the opposite evil; and we grieve in the same proportion, if we have to suffer that evil: since, then, the blessed Virgin loved Jesus with the tenderest and most ardent love, both as her Son, and as her God; she therefore hated, in the highest degree, any evil that was inflicted upon him; and so grieved most vehemently, when she saw it inflicted.

- 2. Because the sufferings of Jesus were her sufferings, since her heart was in his; so that, when he was being crucified, her heart was crucified with him; what he suffered in body, she suffered in her soul; when the soldier pierced his heart, he pierced hers at the same time, because her heart was in his; and thus were verified the words of holy Simeon: "Thy soul a sword shall pierce." 95
- 3. Because, in one respect, she suffered more than Christ; for his sufferings ceased with his death, but the affliction of Mary, far from ceasing, became much more severe, when, his dead body being taken down from the cross, she received it with grief into her arms; and during the three days that it lay in the sepulchre, the thought of his sufferings and death remained vivid in her mind, and afflicted her soul with the most vehement grief.

These considerations should lead you to a determined resolution to suffer, with resignation and for the glory of God, any diffi-

^{*} Luke ii. 35.

culties, or afflictions which his Providence may send you.

Point II. Hear the Almighty addressing his Spouse in the Canticles: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart, for love is strong as death: Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." And consider with what disposition of soul the blessed Virgin suffered that sea of sorrows, into which the Passion of her divine Son had plunged her:—

- 1. She suffered it from a feeling of love—from the ardent love which she had for Him, over whose sufferings she was weeping.
- 2. She suffered it with firmness and constancy; which the Scripture intimates by saying: "She stood by the Cross of Jesus." 97
- 3. She suffered it with a love of his and her enemies—she gave way to no resentment.
- 4. She suffered it without any desire of being relieved or compassionated in her afflictions, being intent solely on the glory of God.

Learn from the blessed Virgin to suffer with these dispositions—resolve to receive

⁹⁶ Cant. viii. 6, 7. ⁹⁷ John xix. 25.

and to bear, in this manner, all the afflictions that shall be sent you by Providence.

Point III. In compliance with these words of St. Paul: "Weep with them that weep," 98 place before your eyes the afflicted Mother of God, and consider how you may practically compassionate her sufferings, and those of your blessed Redeemer. You may do this,

- 1. By making, each day, some act of love and compassion, at the thought of what Christ and his blessed Mother have suffered;—
- 2. By daily performing some act of mortification, in honour of their sufferings;—
- 3. By frequently looking, with feelings of affection and compassion, on the image of Christ crucified and of his blessed Mother standing beneath the Cross.

Reflect frequently and practically on the Passion of your suffering Redeemer, and on the Dolours of his blessed Mother; and resolve upon those devout practices which have just been recommended, and upon such others as genuine piety will suggest to you: never let a day pass without some reflection and devotion on this subject.

98 Rom. xii. 15.

Colloquy.—O Heart of Mary! O Abyss of Sorrows! who shall declare the depth of thy affliction? Give me to share thy sorrows with thee, rather than to describe them! O Queen of Martyrs! if I am unworthy (as I know myself to be) of resigning my life into the hands of persecutors, for the sake of thy divine Son, who has died for my sake; obtain for me at least this grace, that, like thee, I may be a Martyr of love and compassion; and that, from an ardent desire of suffering something for the sake of Him, who has suffered so much for the love of me, I may henceforth receive, not only with patience and resignation, but also with joy and thanksgiving, all the trials, crosses, and afflictions, which his Providence shall be pleased to send me.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—"Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION VIII.

On the Use and Love of Sufferings.

All the good works which you perform in a state of grace, and with a right intention, are pleasing to God and meritorious of an eternal reward; but there is no good work which can render you more pleasing to God, nor which can merit for you a greater recompense, than the receiving and enduring of sufferings with proper dispositions. You cannot perform acts of greater submission and conformity to God's will, than when you embrace willingly and joyfully, for the love of God, all the crosses and afflictions which he is pleased to send you. For, when you receive sufferings readily and joyfully, for the love of him who sends them, and for the sake of doing his will, you thereby practhe sake of doing his will, you thereby practise that obedience, resignation, and conformity, which you owe to God's will; and you are then in the best circumstances wherein you can be, for practising these essential duties in their highest perfection: for you then accomplish the divine will in that which is the most trying to human nature. All men have a natural and insatiable ture. All men have a natural and insatiable desire of happiness—all are led by nature to seek their own enjoyment, and to reject sufferings and afflictions: when therefore, by the fact of sending you sufferings, God shows it to be his will that you should be in a state of trial; if you receive those sufferings readily, and endure them with a willing submission, you render yourself then a complete sacrifice to his will—you comply perfectly with this precept of your Redeemer: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."99

You see, then, why a good and kind Providence has so ordained, that, since the fall of our first parents, the present life should be a time of labours and trials, of troubles and afflictions, especially for the Elect; and you see that it is your duty, and also your interest, to enter into the designs of the Almighty in this respect, 1st, By impressing deeply upon your mind the reasons which induce him to exercise you with trials, afflictions, and sufferings;—and, 2ndly, By receiving them from his hand, with a patient resignation, and even with joy and thanksgiving, as the surest marks of his love towards you.

- I. What, then, are the reasons which induce Almighty God to exercise you with trials, afflictions, and sufferings? It is for your good—to promote your real happiness. For, when he sends you trials of any kind,—sufferings, or afflictions, it is,
- 1. To try your fidelity to him, and to give you opportunities of proving your constancy in his service. Thus, the Archangel Ra-

⁹⁹ Matt. xvi. 24.

phael said to Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation (i.e., tribulation) should prove thee." 100

2. To force you to reflect upon your sinfulness,—to bring you to repentance,—and to afford you easy and efficacious means of expiating your sins. Thus, when the Ninivites were afflicted by the threat of destruction, they were thereby forced to do penance; and by their penance they obtained forgiveness. Thus also king Manasses was brought to sincere repentance, by the afflictions which Providence sent him. In the days of his prosperity, when all things went on smoothly with him, "he did evil before the Lord, and he seduced the inhabitants of Jerusalem also to do evil, beyond all the nations which the Lord had destroyed. And the Lord spoke to him and to his people, and they would not hearken; and therefore he brought upon them the army of the Assyrians: and they took Manasses, and carried him bound with chains and fetters to Babylon. And after that he was in distress, he prayed to the Lord his God, and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers." 101

Tobias xii. 13.
 Par. xxxiii. 2, 9, 10, 11, 12.

- 3. To wean your heart from this world; and to unite you more closely to himself, by leading you to an entire abandonment of yourself into his hands. Thus, (as the History of the Church clearly proves,) the faithful have always been more fervent in their religious duties, and more thoroughly devoted to God, during the times of persecution and distress, than during those of prosperity and peace.
- 4. To increase your merits, by giving your opportunities of practising some of the greatest and most necessary virtues of Christianity; such as Humiliation,—Penance,—Patience,—Resignation,—Conformity to the holy will of God. Thus, when Jesus our Model was in a state of affliction and suffering, he made an act of perfect submission and resignation: "Father, not my will, but thine be done;" 102 and "he became obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross; for which cause God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names."103 On account of these advantages, St. James says: "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations (i.e., tribulations and afflictions); knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience; and patience

Luke xxii. 42. 103 Philip. ii. 8, 9.

hath a perfect work; that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing." Therefore, "blessed is the man that endureth temptation (i. e. trials and afflictions); for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him."

5. To insure your salvation: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." 106 "For, whom God foreknew (to be Saints), he also predestinated them to be made conformable to the image of his Son." 107

How clearly does all this show, under what a pernicious delusion the great bulk of mankind live, in esteeming those persons, who suffer in this life, to be miserable or forsaken by God; and in looking upon those who escape sufferings, as being happy and

¹⁰⁴ James i. 2, 3, 4; 12.

106 Heb. xii. 6.

¹⁰⁶ Matt. v. 10, 11, 12. ¹⁰⁷ Rom. viii. 29.

fortunate! If you dread the humiliations, the privations of poverty, the sufferings or afflictions, which God sends you—if you reject them, or fret and murmur at them; it is because you know not the value of them, and are living under the same delusion as those who seek their happiness in creatures, and not in God's will

II. You must see, then, that you should receive sufferings and afflictions from the hand of God, not only with a patient resignation, but even with joy and thanksgiving, as the surest marks of his special love towards you. For you see, that it is not to render you wretched and miserable that he render you wretched and miserable that he sends them, but to make you happy and blessed. For, in what does your happiness really consist? Certainly not in enjoying the honours, riches, and pleasures of this world, because these things can never give true peace to your heart; but it consists in your being in that state, 1st, wherein God wishes you to be;—2ndly, wherein he himself is with you;—3rdly, wherein you are loved by God;—4thly, wherein you can best prove your love to him;—and, 5thly, wherein you are in the surest way to heaven. Now, such is the state wherein you are, when you are living in sufferings, if you receive and endure them in a proper spirit: For,

- 1. When you are visited with sufferings or afflictions, you are then certain of being in that state, wherein God wishes you to be; because these afflictions come to you (not from your own choice, but) from the Providence of God; and by suffering them with patience, and resignation to his will, you render them meritorious in his sight.
- 2. It is certain, that God is with you in the sufferings, which you endure for his sake: "I am with him in tribulation; I will deliver him; and I will glorify him." He is with you then in a most especial manner; assisting and supporting you by his graces, and sweetening your pains with his heavenly consolations. Thus, St. Paul says in the midst of his sufferings: "I am filled with comfort; and I exceedingly abound with joy, in all our tribulation." In like manner, the Royal Prophet also says: "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts, O God, have given joy to my soul." The Lord helps him on his bed of sorrow; he turns all his couch in his sickness."

100 Ps. xc. 15. 100 2 Cor. vii. 4. 111 Ps. xl. 4. G 2

- 3. When God sends you sufferings, or trials of any kind, it is a sure sign that you are loved by God—that he wishes to promote your real happiness: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." 112
- 4. When in a state of suffering or affliction, you are in a condition then for more perfectly testifying to God, that you really love him; and for uniting yourself still more closely to him. For, what more powerful means can you have for these purposes, than a continual resignation of your whole self into the hands of God, to receive, with equal affection, whatever he is pleased to ordain;—and a constant giving up of your own will and pleasure, to embrace His? "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." 113
- 5. When God sends you trials, troubles, afflictions, or sufferings of any kind, it is certain you are then in the surest way to heaven, if you embrace and endure them for his sake. Because you are then in that royal way which Jesus Christ has marked out for you, and wherein all the Saints have walked before you. Our divine Model says

¹¹² Heb. xii. 6. 113 Job. i. 21.

of himself: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" 114 and St. Paul assures us, that, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him," 115 for that it is "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of heaven." 116 These tribulations, however, are but "momentary and light;" nevertheless, as the same Apostle assures us, they "work for us, above measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory." 117

Oh! if you properly knew, and thoroughly considered these truths which you have just read, would you be afraid of God sending you sufferings? would you reject them? or complain of being obliged to endure them? Would you not, on the contrary, love them,—desire them,—receive them affectionately, and even with joy and thanksgiving, as the special favours of heaven? It was thus the Apostles received them, when they returned from before their persecutors "rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ." 118

Take up your cross, then, willingly and cheerfully—rejoice in having to walk in the

114 Luke xxiv. 26.
115 2 Tim. ii. 12.

¹¹⁷ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

¹¹⁸ Acts v. 41.

116 Acts xiv. 21.

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footsteps of your Redeemer. Desire nothing so much, as to suffer with Christ and for Christ. "God forbid that I should glory," says St. Paul, (and do you say the same with him, and say it from your heart,)—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world:"119 for "with Christ I am nailed to the cross."120

110 Gal. vi. 14.

120 Gal. ii. 19.

MEDITATION XXIII.

On the Glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

EJACULATION: "Grant, O Lord Jesus, that henceforth I may seek the things that are above, where Thou art sitting at the right hand of God—that I may mind the things that are above; not the things that are upon the earth."

St. Ignatius, having completed both the *Purgative* and the *Illuminative* Way of his Spiritual Exercises, commences "The Unitive Way" with a Contemplation on the Resurrection of our Blessed Lord; in order to encourage us, by the prospect of future glory, to be faithful and diligent in all our duties.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Give ear to the encouraging words of the Apostle: "Jesus Christ was delivered up for our sins, and he rose again for our justification;" "who will reform

¹ Rom. iv. 25...

the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory."² And consider the Re-surrection of Jesus Christ as the solid foundation of your hope—as a sure pledge that you also will rise again. For, as "Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith," rose again from the dead, glorious and immortal, "and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God;" so you also will one day rise again: and then you will parone day rise again: and then you will par-ticipate in his glory, if only you will be faithful, during the short time that remains, in following his example. Oh! what a con-soling encouragement does this assured hope afford us, amidst all the troubles of life! For, whenever trials or crosses or sufferings befal us—when difficulties of any kind press heavily upon us, we can comfort and encourage ourselves in the words of holy Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth: and in the last day I shall rise again; and in my flesh I shall see my God: whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold: This my hope is laid up in my bosom."4—— In this manner may you encourage yourself to support any trial, and to endure any suffering, which Providence may send you, by contemplating the glorious prospect which

² Philip. iii. 21. ⁴ Job xix. 25, 26, 27. ³ Heb. xii. 2.

is set before you: for all the difficulties which you have to endure in this world, bear no proportion to that eternal weight of glory which is to be your future recompense. 5

Our blessed Lord, whose life you have to imitate, bere his crown of thorns, before he received his diadem of glory; he carried his Cross to Calvary, and was nailed to ithe received it as the instrument of his humiliation and torture, before it became the ornament of his glory and triumph; he was obedient to the will of his heavenly Father -" obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross;" and "for this cause" it is that "God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above all names," at the bare sound of which "every knee shall bow."6 His humiliations and sufferings are now all at an end: his triumph and his glory will continue for ever.

And, in like manner, after the few years of life, (or perhaps few days only,) which yet remain for you on earth, you also will have finished your course; and you will have entered into eternity, to suffer no more—to die no more; but to live and be happy

⁵ Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

⁶ Philip. ii. 8, 9, 10.
⁷ Rom. vi. 8, 9.

for ever—to reign eternally with Christ in the kingdom of his glory.

Point II. Give ear again to the same Apostle, still further encouraging you: "A faithful saying: If we be dead with Christ, we shall live also with him: and if we suffer, we shall also reign with him,"8 and shall "be glorified with him." And consider how the Resurrection of Jesus Christ serves to strengthen your resolution of dving to sin, that henceforth you may live to God. -In the example of Christ, your divine Model, you see the way by which you are to arrive at a glorious Resurrection. For, as "it behoved Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory;"10 so "it is through many tribulations"—through crosses, and sufferings, and the constant practice of mortification, "that you must enter into the kingdom of heaven."11 For "if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him and be glorified with him."12

But so long as you do not suffer and die with Christ—so long as "the old man" liveth within you, it is in vain that you expect a resurrection to a new and spiritual life.

⁸ 2 Tim. ii. 11. ⁹ Rom. viii. 17.

¹¹ Acts xiv. 21.
12 2 Tim. ii. 12.

¹⁰ Luke xxiv. 26, 46.

Rom. viii. 17.

For "that which is sown is not quickened, except it die first"13-the old grain must die, before it can grow up into a new plant. You must, then, suffer and die with Christ, before you can rise and live with him-your "flesh with its vices and concupiscences" must first be crucified with Christ, before you can "be glorified with him:" for "flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God; neither shall corruption possess incorruption."¹⁴ But "if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrec-

Labour, therefore, to die now with Christ -to die to sin and your passions, to the world and its vanities-live no longer "according to the flesh;" but be always striving, "by the spirit," to "mortify the deeds of the flesh" 16—be continually labouring to "put off, according to former conversation, the old man who is corrupted;" that you may be in a condition to "put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth."

Point III. Attend therefore again to the same Apostle showing how we must rise

^{13 1} Cor. xv. 36.

¹⁶ Rom. viii. 12, 13.

^{14 1} Cor. xv. 50. 15 Rom. vi. 5.

¹⁷ Eph. iv. 22, 24.

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spiritually with Christ; for he admonishes us, "that, as Christ is risen from the dead, by the glory of the Father; so we also may walk in newness of life." 18 And consider how the Resurrection of Christ teaches you the necessity, not only of dying to sin, but of living unto justice; not of ceasing merely from producing evil fruits, but of beginning to "bring forth good fruits;" that henceforth you "may walk in newness of life :....know-ing that Christ, rising from the dead, dieth now no more-death shall no more have dominion over him....So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord."19 --- When you have died to sin, your work is not then completed-you have only gone through the preparatory part of it; for you have to "walk" (i. e., to be always going forward) "in newness of life;" you have to "avoid evil," that you may "do good"20-to die to sin, that you may live to justice; you have to become dead to the world and yourself, that you may be alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord; that it may be now no longer you that live, but Christ that liveth in you; 21 that is to say, you have to be henceforth a new and spiritual man, bearing the image,

Rom. vi. 4. Rom. vi. 4, 9, 11

²⁰ Ps. xxxiii. 15.
²¹ Gal. ii. 20.

not of the earthly, but of the heavenly Adam; and making it your sole study to love and serve God alone. You must manifest, therefore, the life of Christ in your body, by the constant practice of mortification and self-denial; you must manifest his life and spirit in your soul also, by being "poor in spirit,"—"meek and humble of heart," patient,—obedient,—and chaste;—by exercising works of charity,—and by "hungering and thirsting after justice" or perfection.
You must, in this manner, live the life of Christ; and then, as the Apostle says, "in his life you will be saved;" 22 and so you will participate in the glory of his Resurrection.

Colloquy.—O Jesus, my Redeemer, who having died upon the Cross for my salvation, didst rise again glorious and immortal; grant that, dying to the world and myself, I may live to thee. Hitherto, alas! I have may live to thee. Hitherto, alas: I nave been dead in sin: by following my own will and inclinations, I have become enslaved to many evils. "Mine iniquities are gone over my head, and, as a heavy burden, are become heavy upon me: mine enemies live and are grown stronger than I;" for "the flesh with its vices and concupiscences,"

²² Rom. v. 10. G 7

and the world with its vanities, live in me—I am under their dominion. "But thou, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up again," and my soul shall live to thee. Grant that, rising with thee to a new and spiritual life, I may "die now no more"—that the death of sin may "no more have dominion over me;" but that henceforth I may "seek the things that are above, where Thou art sitting at the right hand of God."

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.

MEDITATION XXIV.

On the Love of God.

EJACULATION:—"My beloved to me, and I to him."

St. Ignatius, in his Meditation on this subject, directs us to beg earnestly of Almighty God, that he would give us a lively sense of his many and great benefits, and enable us to see their extent; in order that we may be thereby excited to devote ourselves entirely to his Love and Service.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

POINT I. With feelings of gratitude and love, hear the Almighty declaring to you the duration or extent of his love: "I have the duration or extent of his love: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, taking pity on thee." And consider how God has given and still gives HIMSELF to love you wholly and entirely; that is to say, he gives to the love of you his entire self and all that he has created. For, the love wherewith God loves you, is God himself; in as much as there is nothing in God wherewith he does not love you. 1, The Eternal Father loves you, giving his only-begotten Son;—2, The Eternal Son of God loves you, being incarnate, suffering, and dying. Son;—2, The Eternal Son of God loves you, being incarnate, suffering, and dying, for the love of you; and giving himself to you, to be the food of your soul;—3, The Holy Ghost also loves you, enlightening you by his inspirations, sanctifying you by his graces, and enriching you with his gifts;—4, The divine Omnipotence loves you, creating and always preserving you;—5, The divine Immensity loves you, being always present with you, and condescending that "in him you should live, and move, and be;"—6, The divine Wisdom and Providence love you, watching over you continually, and providing for you every thing

²³ Jer. xxxi. 3.

that is necessary;—7, The Eternity of God loves you, rendering you immortal;—8, And his infinite Goodness and Bounty love you, in making you for himself, and providing for you endless incomprehensible happiness in the kingdom of his glory;—9, God loves you, moreover, with the entire Universe; since he employs all his creatures, even his Angels, in serving you for your good.

Ponder well in your heart this infinite Love which your God exercises towards you; and see whether you correspond with it, as far as your limited nature allows you—whether you love Him with your whole self; that is to say, with all your affections,—with all that you are,—with all that you have,—with all that you do,—and with all that you suffer. Lament your deficiencies; and resolve to do better in future.

Point II. That you may be still further excited to return love for love, give ear to the Prophet Isaias showing the intensity of God's Love in your regard: "In his love and in his mercy, he redeemed them, and he carried them, and lifted them up." And consider how God loves you in a sovereign

²⁴ Is. lxiii. 9.

degree or above all things. For he loves you, O man, above every other creature; since there is no other creature to which he has given, and still gives, such great favours, and marks of special love, as to you. To what other creature is the Son of God hypostatically united? for what others has he laboured, and suffered, and died; and given himself to be their spiritual food?——That Jesus Christ loves you even above his own mortal life, St. Augustin declares: "Thou hast loved me, O Lord, more than thine own life; because thou hast consented to die for my sake."*

Thus, then, God loves you above all things—above all other creatures. Will not you, therefore, love HIM above all things—with your whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? Examine now, and see whether there be any thing which you love as much as God, or not for God's sake; and resolve to make Him henceforth the sole object of all your affections.

POINT III. Give ear now to your God complaining of you by his Prophet: "What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard,

^{* &}quot;Dilexisti me, Domine, plusquam te; quia mori dignatus es propter me."

that I have not done to it?"25 And consider that I have not done to it?" And consider how God loves you, not with a barren affection, but in his acts—by doing many and great things in your favour. For, existing in all his creatures which serve you, he gives them their being, power, permanency, and all their various qualities, for your use, and for the sake of promoting your good. Every moment, He is present with you maintaining your existence, which is like a continual creation. It is He that serves you in and with his creatures: with the sum He gives you light—with the earth He sumports gives you light,—with the earth He supports you and feeds you;—and He is continually protecting, preserving, and assisting you with his graces and supernatural gifts.

This is what God does for the love of

you: and will you not return him love for love? will you not go beyond mere affections, and labour in doing all you can to testify your love?——Lament that you have hitherto done so little;—resolve to begin now at least;—implore God to strengthen your resolution, and to assist you in reducing it to immediate practice.

Colloguy.—O my God and my all! O infinite Charity! thou hast indeed "loved

²⁵ Is. v. 4.

me with an everlasting love;" but how lit-tle have I loved thee in return! Oh! grant that henceforth I may love thee as I ought! Ah! that my ungrateful heart should ever have been wanting in this great duty! I will however be wanting no longer: although late indeed, yet now at least I will begin to love thee, and to love thee with my whole self; for so thou hast loved me. Receive, therefore, O Lord, as the gift of that love which I owe thee, the oblation of my entire liberty-I give it up to thee without reserve: Accept my memory, my understanding, and my will, that they may be employed wholly for thee. Whatever I have, whatever I am, is thy gift; all this I now restore to thee, subjecting it totally to the disposal of thy will. One only thing I beg of thee to bestow—give me a love of thee, together with thy grace; I am then sufficiently rich, and nothing more do I ask.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—"Soul of Christ;" page v.

MEDITATION XXV.

On Longing for the Attainment of our Last End, by ardent Desires of Seeing God; and on its final Attainment, by the Enjoyment of the Beatific Vision in Heaven.

EJACULATION: "When, O Lord, shall I be so happy as to desire thee alone? when will it be given me to see thy face? Oh! when shall I be with thee in thy kingdom, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee?"

St. Ignatius, in his Spiritual Exercises, has one main object in view, which is, to conduct man effectually to his last end—to bring him to the Sight and Possession of his God in a happy eternity.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Attend to the warning given by our Lord in the parable, wherein he cautions you against confining your desires to this present life, instead of directing them to God. That unhappy man who, during life, had desired and obtained, not God, but only his earthly gifts; and who, as soon as he had succeeded in obtaining them, began to exult in the abundance of his possessions -that deluded man, while in the very act of his exultation, heard God saying to him: "Thou fool! this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" From this our blessed Lord concludes: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." 26 Consider now who it is that "layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." It is he who seeks himself, and not God-he whose pursuits are directed by earthly desires, and not by desires of seeing and possessing God. St. Augustin, speaking on this parable, says: "He is rich towards God, who is full of the love of God; and who serves him solely from a motive of love, and not for the sake of reward;" that is to say, he is "rich towards God," who is full of ardent desires of seeing and possessing him, purely for his own sake. Holy Job was "rich towards God," when, in his misfortunes, he could say from his heart: "Although he should kill me, I will trust in him; and I will reprove (or correct) my

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²⁶ Luke xii. 20, 21.

ways in his sight."²⁷ As if he had said: It is not for the sake of obtaining life, or health, or any good for myself, that I trust in God and serve him, or that I desire to possess him; but it is for his own sake alone.

Point II. Hear what kind of desires the heart expresses to God, when it is inflamed with the love of him: "And Moses said to the Lord: If I have found favour in thy sight, show me thy face—show me thy glory." And consider how a genuine charity, by which we love and serve God for his own sake alone, excites in the soul ardent desires of seeing God.

- 1. If you have no desire of seeing God in heaven, it is a fearful sign that charity does not influence your heart; and that to you may be applied what the Royal Prophet says of the reprobate: "They set at nought the desirable land."²⁹ When a pilgrim has no desire of seeing the object of his pilgrimage, he certainly shows that he has not the spirit of a true pilgrim—if an exile does not desire to see his country, he has ceased to be a patriot.
 - 2. Desires of seeing God have a very

²⁷ Job xiii. 15.

²⁹ Ps. cv. 24.

^{*} Exod. xxxiii. 13, 18.

powerful effect in extinguishing our desires of earthly things; as the presence of light expels darkness, or as the application of heat destroys cold.

- 3. No one can be a true disciple of Christ, who does not (at least sometimes), with his whole heart or efficaciously, seek heaven, that is, to see God. For, in order to be a true disciple of Christ, you must despise earthly things, and detach your heart from them; consequently, if you adhere with affection to these things, you cannot be considered as a true disciple of Christ. Now, if you have no desire of heavenly things, you must be considered as adhering to earthly things; because your heart cannot be without adhering to something.
 - 4. You will approach so much nearer to heaven and to a union with God, by how much the more ardently you seek heaven, or desire to see God; as we know that the attracted metal is so much nearer to the magnet, by how much the more strongly it is attracted. Thus, as Moses advanced towards God, by a closer union with him, his desires of seeing God became more ardent: "If I have found favour in thy sight, show me thy face—show me thy glory." Thus also was David inflamed with the most

longing desires of seeing God: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God! My soul hath thirsted after the living God! when shall I come and appear before the face of God?" It was from the like vehement longings after God, that St. Paul "desired to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." The same kind of ardent desires of seeing God made St. Ignatius say: "Oh! how worthless, how insipid does the earth appear to me, whenever I look up to heaven!"

Endeavour to enter into the dispositions of these great Saints—to inflame your soul with the like ardent desires of seeing God in heaven: that you may love him more perfectly, and may cease to be in any danger of ever offending him again, by being con-

firmed in his love for ever.

Point III. Give ear to the Royal Prophet declaring, in raptures of delight, the happiness of those who have been admitted to the Sight and Possession of God: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever: for better is one day in thy courts above thousands." And consider the felicity of those who attain their last end. Their felicity

²⁰ Ps. xli. 2, 3. ³¹ Philip. i. 23. ²² Ps. lxxxiii. 5, 11.

consists in enjoying the Beatific Vision—in seeing God face to face. From this, as from an inexhaustible source, every other enjoyment proceeds. For, "To see the face of the Living God, says St. Augustin, is the Supreme Good,—the joy of the Angels and of all the Saints;—it is the everlasting source of bliss,—the internal and external joy that delighteth the paradise of God;—it is the plenitude of happiness to man,—the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding." 33

As soon, therefore, as you shall have arrived at the Sight and Possession of your God, you will be supremely happy—all your desires will be perfectly satisfied.—You will then (in consequence of seeing God, and of being united to him) have your understanding perfected by a participation of infinite wisdom, and by a clear knowledge of the wondrous works of the Deity;—You will then be able to "comprehend, with all the Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Height, and Depth" of God's Goodness and Bounty, and of his loving kindness towards you; and you will be filled with his love "unto all the fulness of God;" Then you will clearly see the extent of the mercies your dear Redeemer; and of that ex-

³⁵ Solil. 37. ³⁴ Eph. iii. 18, 19.

cessive charity which induced him to do so much, in order to purchase and facilitate your admission into the kingdom of heaven; —In the person of Christ, you will then behold your own nature elevated to the very throne of the Almighty; you will see the Son of God, clothed with Majesty and Glory, styling himself your Brother, and pouring forth continually torrents of sweetness upon his Elect;—You will then be able (as far as is possible for created beings) to dive into the great mysteries of the Adorable Trinity, and of the Incarnation of the Son of God; which will fill your soul with inconceivable joy;—Then your de-lightful occupation will be, to contemplate eternally, in the presence of the Deity, his infinite Perfections; whereby your soul will be overwhelmed, continually, with new raptures of divine love; you will be incessantly in ecstasies of the purest delight; and, by an intimate union with the Divinity, you will be quite lost in the Immensity and Incomprehensibility of your God.

Let these considerations, by means of serious reflection, sink deeply into your heart; so as to conceive in your soul the most ardent desires of seeing God in his glory, and of being united to him for ever; —resolve to employ diligently all the means which are necessary for this purpose:—and

beg of God to assist you in accomplishing your resolution.

Colloguy.—" Oh! how great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that hope in thee," and love thee! No wonder that thy Saints, raising up their eyes from this vale of tears to contemplate the joys of thy kingdom, have sighed so ardently for the arrival of that happy moment, which was to separate them from this wretched world, and unite them eternally to thee! no wonder that thy Apostle, to whom thou didst show some small glimpse of thy kingdom, should, after that, "desire to be dissolved, and to be with thee!" Oh! when, dear Lord, wilt thou remove from me this veil of flesh, which hides thee from my sight? oh! when will that moment come, which will for ever close my eyes to this world, and open them to see thee face to face in thy kingdom—to behold thee arrayed in all the charms of thy infinite Perfections?

But "my sojourning is prolonged"—thou leavest me to labour yet a little while longer, in this vale of tears; in order that, by the exercise of *Prayer*, *Mortification*, and

Works of Charity, I may perfect thy image in my soul, and so become fitted for an eternal union with thee in the kingdom of thy glory. Enable me, O Lord, to accomplish this work which thou hast given me to do: "Conduct me in thy way, that I may walk in thy truth:" teach me to love thee with my whole heart; help me to serve thee with all my strength; and make me persevere constantly in thus loving and serving thee, until I shall come to the secure possession of thee. "Show me, O Lord, thy mercy, and grant me thy salvation; that I may glorify thy name for ever." Henceforth I will seek thee with all the desires of my soul: for "my heart panteth after thee, my God"-my soul longeth to see thee in thy glory! oh! "when shall I come and appear before thy face?"

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—" Soul of Christ."—"Receive, O Lord;" page v.

CONSIDERATION IX.

On Walking with God, by a Constant Attention to his Presence; whereby we Commence, in this Life, that happy Union with God, which is to be Perfected, and Perpetuated for all Eternity, in Heaven.

- I. There are many powerful Motives which should induce you to be constantly mindful of God's Presence:—
- 1. The holy Fathers, and Masters of a Spiritual Life generally, assure us, that, to be properly mindful of the Presence of God, is a most efficacious remedy against sin. For, as St. Clement of Alexandria says, "If any one bear in mind that God is always present with him, he will be preserved, by this sole means, from falling off into wilful sin." By this means, (that is, by impressing on the mind a vivid idea of the divine Presence,) St. Paphnutius brought St. Thais from her abandoned life to repentance and amendment; and, by the same means, St. Ephrem produced the like effect on a person of a similar character.

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- 2. Nothing is more powerful in forcing and enabling us to overcome temptations, to avoid dangers, and to surmount difficulties, than a vivid remembrance of the actual Presence of God. The Royal Prophet had learned this by his own experience, when he said: "Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou, O Lord, art with me." 35
- 3. A constant remembrance of the divine Presence, and a life corresponding therewith, are the compendium, and the entire sum of perfection in this life. God himself assures us of it; for, when teaching Abraham how he was to become perfect, he said: "Walk before me, and be perfect."36 All those who have been eminent in sanctity or perfection, have been eminent also in being constantly and vividly mindful of the Presence of God. From amongst all mankind, God has made special choice of two Saints; whom he has taken up to heaven without dying, and whom he is reserving, in a state of happiness, till the time of Antichrist, when they will come to fight against him. Now, in what did these two privileged servants of God particularly excel? The Holy Scripture tells us, that "Enoch walked with God;" and

³⁶ Ps. xxii. 4.

s Gen. xvii. 1.

"God took him."³⁷ And as to Elias, we learn from the same divine Authority, that no idea was more strongly and constantly in his mind, than that of the Presence of God. It was his usual expression to say: "In the sight of the Lord—In the presence of the Lord—The Lord liveth, in whose sight I stand."³⁸—The blessed Virgin is the greatest of all the Saints, having surpassed all others in perfection: and God himself tells us how constantly mindful she was of his divine Presence. For, in the Canticles, he represents her as saying: "I sleep; and my heart watcheth; the voice of my Beloved knocking."³⁹ For the holy Fathers and Commentators explain this of the blessed Virgin.

4. No one can be truly religious, unless he exercise himself in bearing in mind the Presence of God. For, to be truly religious, we must tend to perfection: now, perfection consists in constantly remembering and loving God, and in offering all to him. Therefore, we do not tend to perfection, but neglect that essential duty, unless we are constantly striving to walk in the Presence of God. Consequently, if you wish to know how far you have advanced in perfection,

³⁷ Gen. v. 22, 24. 38 3 Kings xvii. 39 Cant. v. 2.

you have only to examine how far you have advanced in the practice of "walking before God," or "with God." 40

5. A constant and vivid remembrance of the Presence of God is a certain commencement of the happiness of heaven in this present life. For, as the happiness of heaven consists in seeing God; so it is some beginning of this happiness on earth, if we always see him present, as far as is allowed to the condition of this life. To stand in the sight of the Lord, is the happiness of the Elect in heaven: To stand in his sight, is, in like manner, the happiness of the just on earth. St. Ephrem says: "He who is always mindful of God's Presence, is like an Angel; for the Angels always see the face of the Father."

II. These motives, which show you the necessity and advantages of being mindful of God's Presence, should lead to consider well how this means of union with God may be effectually reduced to practice. By a little reflection you will find, that much time and many occasions are afforded you, in the course of each day, for bearing in mind the Presence of God; and if these be em-

⁴⁰ Gen. xvii. 1, 3; and Gen. v. 22.

braced, instead of neglected, you will soon make great proficiency in this pious exercise. For, if you do not remember the divine Presence during the greater part of the day, it must be because you do not try; since you have so many helps. For instance,

- 1. Your daily Meditation affords you an hour, or half an hour, besides the previous preparation. During this time, you not only may, but ought to bear in mind the Presence of God.
- 2. The Sacrifice of the Mass supplies another half hour, wherein you ought to keep yourself in God's Presence.
- 3. Your morning and night Prayers also, with your General and Particular Examinanations of Conscience, and the "Angelus" every morning, noon, and night, furnish about half an hour or three quarters more.
- 4. Your daily Spiritual Reading is another portion of time, during which you are reminded of God's Presence.
- 5. Pious Conversations,—listening to Sermons and Instructions,—frequent Confessions and Communions, &c., supply many other occasions for remembering that God is present with you.
 - 6. Besides the times already mentioned,

how many occasions are there, during each day, when you may offer Ejaculatory Prayers to God? You should endeavour to acquire the practice of doing this very frequently: for these short prayers are very effectual with God. The repenting thief on the Cross offered one of these to his Redeemer, whom he saw present with him: "Lord, remember me, when thou shalt come into thy kingdom;" and by this Ejaculatory Prayer, he obtained a promise that he should be that day with his Redeemer in paradise.

7. Every action, also, which you perform, is an occasion when you should think of God, by offering it up to him, and begging his blessing upon it. There are, moreover, certain small portions of time, between the end of one occupation and the beginning of another, and, likewise, during the occupations themselves, when you should, from habit, turn your mind to God whom you know to be present with you: you should do this by short acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, Contrition, Adoration, Praise, Thanksgiving, &c., sometimes one act, and sometimes another.

Now, make a proper use of these times and occasions, as you ought to do; and then you will "Walk before God, and be perfect"—you will acquire the habit of

keeping yourself constantly in God's Presence; and He, in return, will always look down favourably upon you, by inclining his ear to your prayers, and by enriching your soul with his choicest graces and blessings. And you will thus become every day more and more united to him, until you finally arrive at a perfect and perpetual union with him in the kingdom of heaven.

CONCLUDING MEDITATION,

Showing the Necessity of Persevering in your Good Resolutions.

EJACULATION: "O my God, who hast given me to will that which is good; enable me also to accomplish it according to thy good pleasure."

St. Ignatius, at the end of his Exercises, tells us that the Fear of God, especially a filial fear, is to be recommended as a powerful means of making us persevere in his love and service.

The Preparatory Prayer, and the Preludes; as page iv.

Point I. Attend to the warning of St. Paul: "O man, thou art inexcusable."41

⁴¹ Rom. ii. 1.

And consider how you can have no excuse before God, after these Exercises, if you do not now live to God-if you do not regulate your life in future, according to the truths upon which you have been meditating,—ac cording to the dictates of your conscience, —and according to the resolutions which the grace of God has now led you to form. You will not be able to say: "I did not know what was required of me,—I was not instructed in these duties,—I was not exhorted to observe them;—I had no one to assist me in reflecting upon them, nor to stir me up to good resolutions;—God did not solicit my heart by his graces, &c." You cannot say anything of this kind: all you can say is, "I had every opportunity and every means afforded me, but I would not." Take care, then, that you be not like those heathens, who, (as St. Paul says,) though they knew God, did not glorify him! as God. You know what God, what Reh! gion, what Conscience require of you,—you know what your present Resolutions require of you: see, then, that you act accordingly; for otherwise, it will be said to you after death: "O man, thou art without excuse."

11:50

⁴² Rom. i. 21.

POINT II. Attend to the more fearful warning of your Redeemer: "The servant who did not know his master's will, and did things worthy of punishment, shall be beaten with few stripes; but that servant who did know his Master's will, and did not do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."43 And consider the gloomy prospect before you, if you live in the wilful neglect of what you know to be your duty. From these words of our blessed Lord, you see you must expect a severer con-demnation from God, after death, if you should be as negligent in his service after these Spiritual Exercises, as you were be-fore—you must then expect a much more terrible condemnation, than if you had not had this special assistance; because "To whom much hath been given, from him much also will be required; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more."44 Therefore, since God has conferred upon you so great a favour or grace, by having given you to perform these Spiritual Exercises, take care you return not to those evils or negligences, which you have now resolved to correct. Listen to what a celebrated Religious has said on this subject: "Whoever is not cor-

⁴³ Luke xii, 47, 48.

⁴⁴ Luke xii. 48.

rected by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, even hell itself will not correct him." If you do not amend your life, after such a help, you see you have every reason to fear: in order, then, that you may not have anything to fear on this account, consider what you have to do—how you have to live in future;—Make for yourself a Rule of Life in accordance with what you know to be your duty;—Resolve to be very exact in the observance of your Rule of Life;—Make your resolutions firm and decisive;—Renew them from day to day,—and be continually studying and striving to put them in practice.

Point III. St. John tells us, in the Apocalypse, that he saw a mighty Angel come down from heaven, and that "the Angel swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever: That time shall be no longer." Consider that this awful announcement may very soon have its fulfilment in your regard. Perhaps these Meditations or Spiritual Exercises are the last exciting means which God had provided for you: it may be, that, if you profit not by this means—by this grace, it will be said of you, as the Guardian Angels of Babylon said of that hardened city: "We

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⁴⁵ Apoc. x. 1, 6.

would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us now forsake her."46 And as soon as you shall perceive that the awful period is at hand, when time for you shall be no longer; then will rush into your mind the opportunities and advantages which you have had in your Meditations or Spiritual Exercises,—the admonitions and exhortations which you have thereby received,—the graces wherewith those admonitions were accompanied,—and the resolutions which you were led to form, but which afterwards you neglected to keep. These fearful recollections will seem to say to you: "Could I not have been prepared for this hour, if I would? There was nothing to prevent me—the means which I have had were sufficient, and more than sufficient!" You will then see the value, and lament the abuse, of the opportunities which you have rendered fruitless; and you will grieve over the greatness of the good which you have thereby lost, and which can never be recovered for a whole eternity.

Now, that this may never be the case with you, consider (as you have been already exhorted)—consider what you have to do—isee how you ought to live in future;—make your resolutions accordingly, and make

⁴⁶ Jer. li. 9.

them firm and decisive;—renew them from day to day,—study how you may put them in practice,—and be continually striving to employ the means which are necessary for this purpose: let *Prayer*, *Mortification*, and *Charity*, be the constant practice of your life.

Colloquy.—O Lord my God! what will become of me in the end? I have frequently before time, as now, resolved to amend my life; but I did not keep those former resolutions, and I know that I am former resolutions, and I know that I am equally liable to break these which I have made on the present occasion. But I also know that thy grace is sufficient for me: oh! give it me, then, in order that now at length I may remain faithful in my duty to thee. I have reason to make this petition with the greatest confidence in thy goodness and mercy; for thou hast now dealt with me in mercies far beyond what I had any right to hope or expect. Already my wretched soul had well nigh dwelt in hell, when lo! thou hast graciously rescued me from the infernal abyss,—thou hast provided for me thy powerful graces,—and thou still givest me time to produce those fruits of virtue which thou requirest from me: O Fountain of Mercy! how can I neglect to serve thee faithfully, after thou hast shown so much

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goodness and loving kindness in my regard? Oh! if there be any one affection in my heart, not given or devoted to thy love and service, tear it from the object on which it is misplaced, that it may be fixed on thee alone. Grant, dear Saviour, that I may now walk in newness of life; and that I may advance daily from virtue to virtue, till I arrive at that degree of perfection which thou requirest from me; that so, I may come at length to the secure possession of thee, my God, in a happy eternity.

"Our Father."—"Hail Mary."—Soul of Christ."—Receive, O Lord;" page v.



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